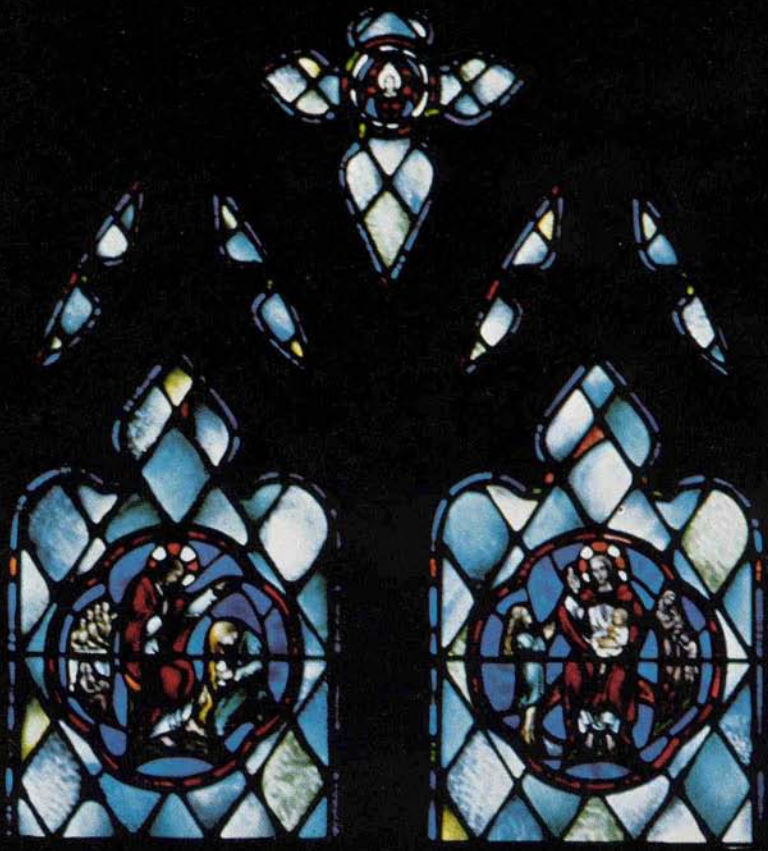
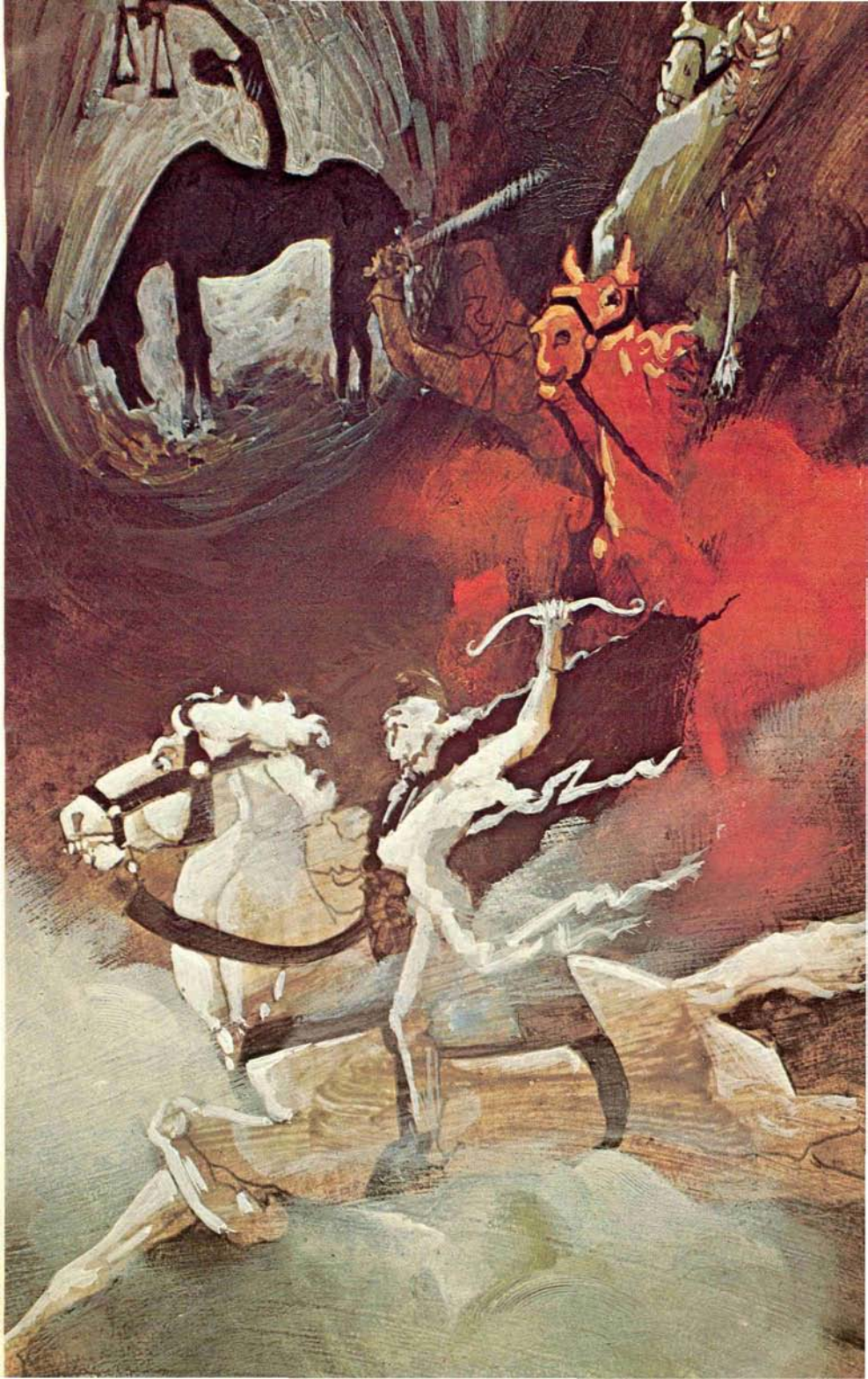
4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

THE WHITE HORSE



FALSE RELIGION

In the book of Revelation we find a disturbing vision of four fearsome horsemen (Rev. 6:1-8). Each of these horsemen is a symbol of the four major punishments to be inflicted upon a rebellious mankind — probably in the not-too-distant future! Each represents the final, end-time culmination of the major crises with which the world has been confronted for centuries — false religion, war, famine and disease epidemics. This series of booklets will make the prophecies of Revelation 6 come to life. You will learn the significance of each symbolic horse and rider. This message is one of the most frightening in all of the Bible. You need to be informed and prepared for what's ahead in Bible prophecy!



4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

THE WHITE HORSE

FALSE RELIGION

by George Ritter

Illustration by Brian Knowles

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE PRESS • Pasadena, California

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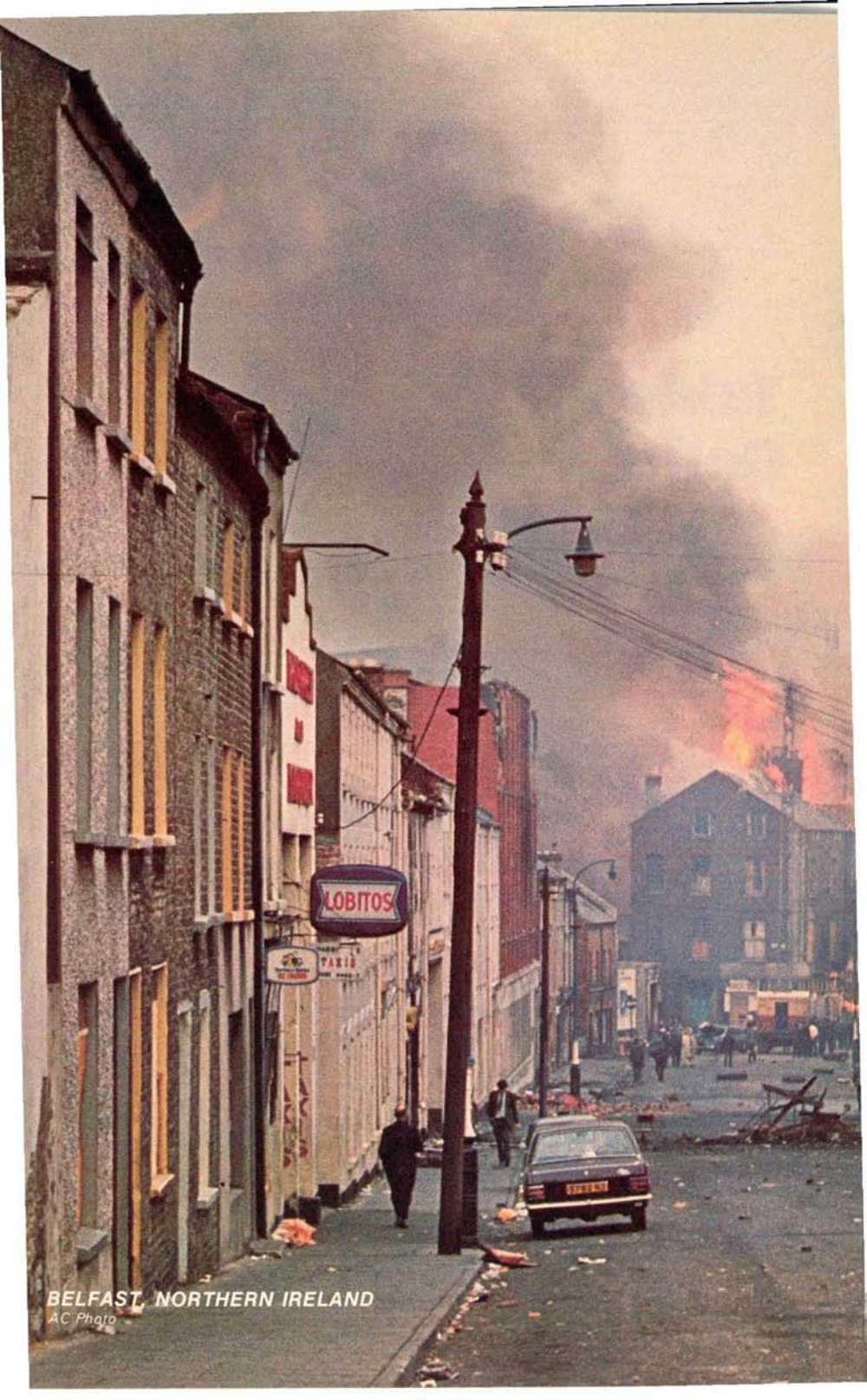
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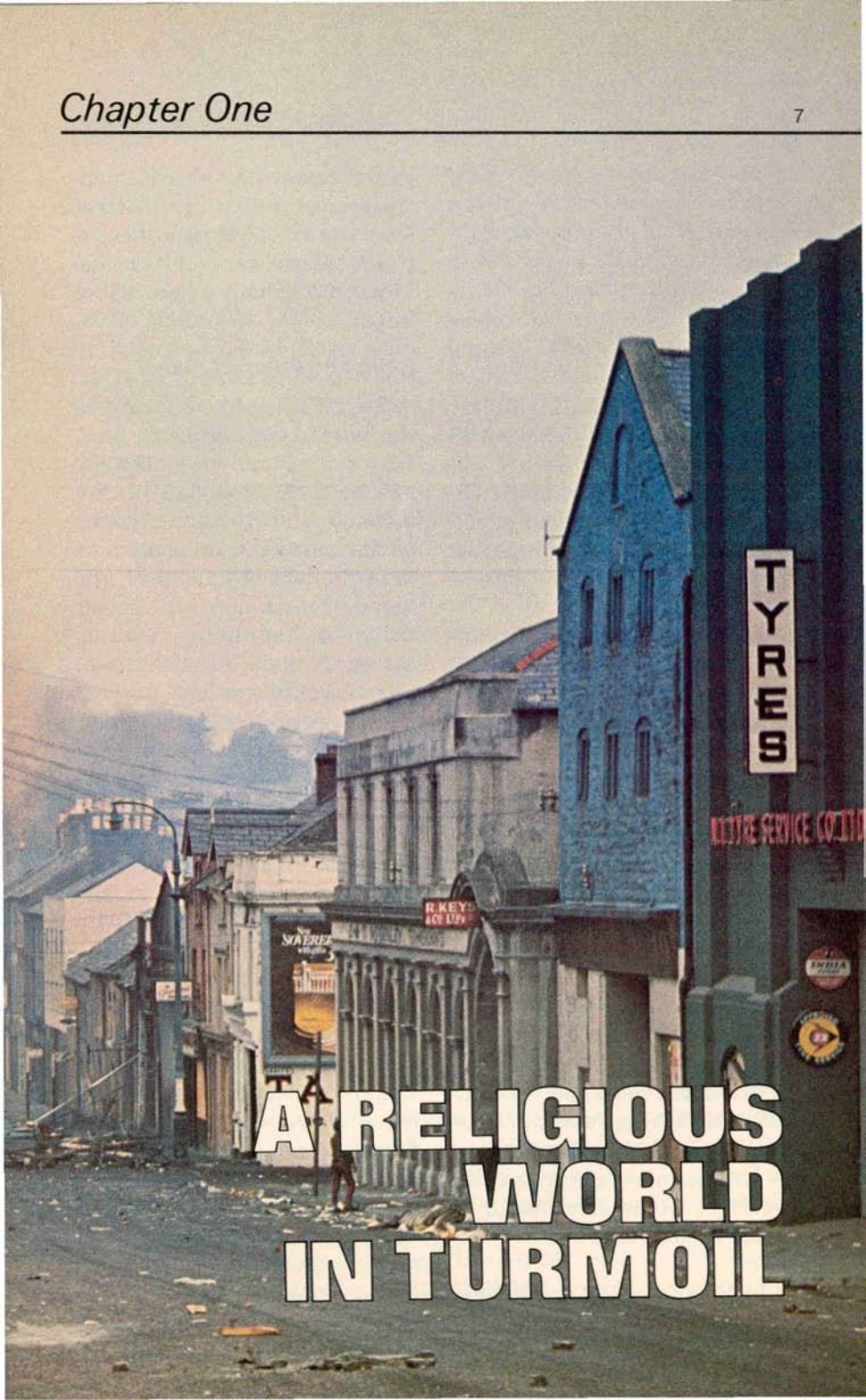
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BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND
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A RELIGIOUS WORLD IN TURMOIL

Four small children sob as the body of their mother is lowered into a freshly dug grave. She is another tragic victim claimed by the long nightmare of terrorist bombings that continue to blight the face of Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, a young Roman Catholic girl is lashed to a post and mercilessly beaten by an angry knot of men. Dozens of people watch impassively from their windows, making no attempt to rescue her from her enraged tormentors.

On the outskirts of Tripoli, Lebanon, a band of gunmen order 25 Moslem travelers to evacuate a bus. With no warning they open fire with a submachine gun and twelve innocent victims are cut down in the fusillade of bullets.

In Rome, the Pope reaffirms his church's age-old stand on the use of birth-control devices as millions of people around the world continue to suffer from hunger, malnutrition and disease.

In Saudi Arabia, the government bans the use of contraceptives following a decree from the World Moslem League that "birth control was invented by the enemies of Islam."

Religion: Boon or Bane?

To millions of people around the world, such religious practices can be (and are) a definite hazard to life and health. For instance, the Hindu veneration of the sacred cow certainly does little to help the plight of millions of malnourished people living on the Indian subcontinent. Nor does their ancient religious caste system. In recent times "untouchables" have been beaten for attempting to satisfy their thirst from an upper-caste temple well.

Or consider the negative impact Chairman Mao's revolutionary revival had on the peoples of the Far East. Millions of Chinese were enslaved in a system right out of the pages of Orwell's *1984*. In many quarters, Mao was (and still is) virtually worshiped as a revolutionary demigod; his little red book became the Chinese Bible. Many a militant Communist was imbued with a quasi-religious "hellfire and brimstone" zeal, and some were more than ready to take up the sword in a holy crusade against the

"decadent nations of Western capitalism."

Religious superstitions have virtually condemned many people in the underdeveloped world to lives of perpetual poverty and deprivation. In some areas of the world, prayer flags are thought to be more important than health or sanitary measures in combating outbreaks of cholera. Boiling drinking water is often understood more in terms of a religious ritual than a biological cleansing process. In the hills of Nepal, iron ore is smelted using the same process that was employed by the ancient Greeks millennia ago. No attempt has been made to improve existing techniques. Instead, a small image of a local deity molded into the wall of the smelter is looked to as a guarantor of successful operations.

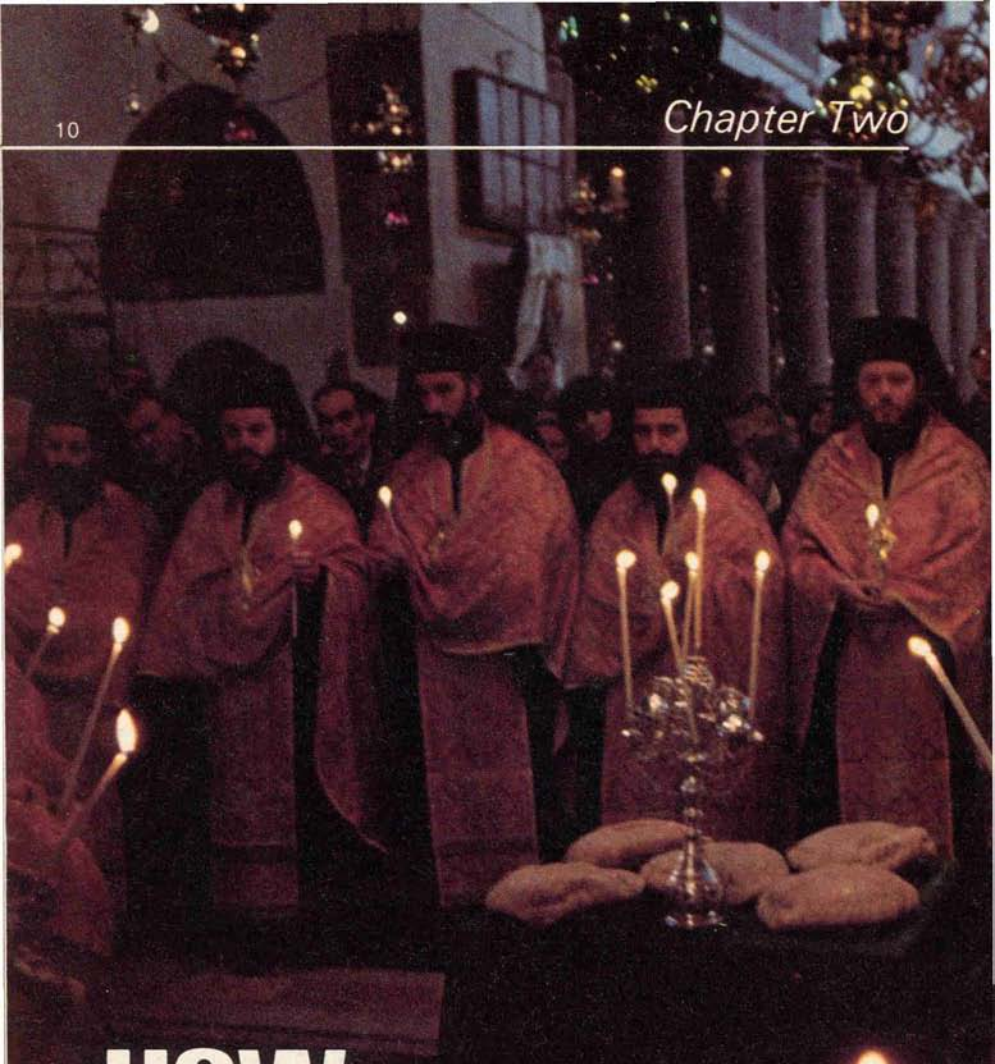
Cure for Woes?

To some, all this might seem somewhat ironic. Traditionally, men have always thought of religion as a powerful positive force working for the betterment of the human condition. Today the bulk of the world's population adheres to some type of religious creed in one form or another. Millions of Western Christians go to church every Sunday, men in office invoke the name of God in public ceremonies, faithful Moslems take their pilgrimages to Mecca, and Hindus and Buddhists diligently practice the same precepts that were handed down to their forefathers generations ago.

In spite of all this outward religiosity, though, the state of the world's health continues to deteriorate. Numerous nations are either in a state of war, preparing for war, or recovering from the last one. Major powers continue to accelerate a no-win nuclear arms race. Governments rise and topple, leaders are submerged in bloody coups, and the majority of the world's population still lives under the ominous shadow of famine, disease, malnutrition and poverty.

Is all this occurring because mankind has lost sight of his original religious convictions? Would *more* religion be the answer to humanity's problems? Can man's religion help solve the monumental problems now facing the human race? Or on the other hand is religion the *cause* rather than the *cure* for many of mankind's present woes?

Before we can answer these questions, we need to go back to the beginning and see how the foundation of virtually all of the world's major religions was first laid.



HOW CHRISTIANITY LOST SIGHT OF ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE


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Throughout all of recorded history, mankind has shown a remarkable talent for getting itself into religious hot water. Deception in the field of faith and morals can be traced all the way back to the beginning of human existence. In fact, our first parents, Adam and Eve, started things off on the wrong foot when they fell prey to the world's first religious con artist — Satan the devil.

Satan was smart enough to know that a direct, open approach was almost certainly doomed to failure. So he came on as a "good guy" dressed up as an innocent-looking serpent. At the same time, he brought along what appeared to be a very religious-sounding message.

His first tactic was to debunk the fact that Adam and Eve were mortal fleshly beings. "You shall not surely die," he told the woman. Then he piqued Adam and Eve's intellectual vanity with the alluring promise, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). Using this approach, Satan subtly inferred that there was a vast amount of esoteric knowledge that was theirs for the asking — knowledge that God was holding back from them. All they had to do was accept his program. Before it was all over, he had added another element to his false religious package: a feeling of guilt concerning their physical bodies and the subject of sex (Gen. 3:7-10).

Satan's offer in the Garden of Eden quickly became the pattern of many of the world's ancient pagan mystery religions. His statement ("You shall not surely die") was another way of saying that man has an immortal soul. Unlike God, Satan was not leveling with Adam and Eve.

Numerous scriptures clearly demonstrate that the idea of an immortal soul is a figment of ecclesiastical imagination. (See Ecclesiastes 3:19; Psalms 146:4; Matthew 10:28. Also write for our free booklet *Do You Have an Immortal Soul?*)

The mystery religions that followed likewise placed an inordinate emphasis on hidden knowledge, ceremonies and rituals. By religiously following certain sacred rites, the devotee would supposedly gain favor with the gods and earn a gilt-

edged guarantee of eternal immortality. The idea that sex and the human body are inherently evil also managed to permeate much of later religious thought.

Greek Synthesis

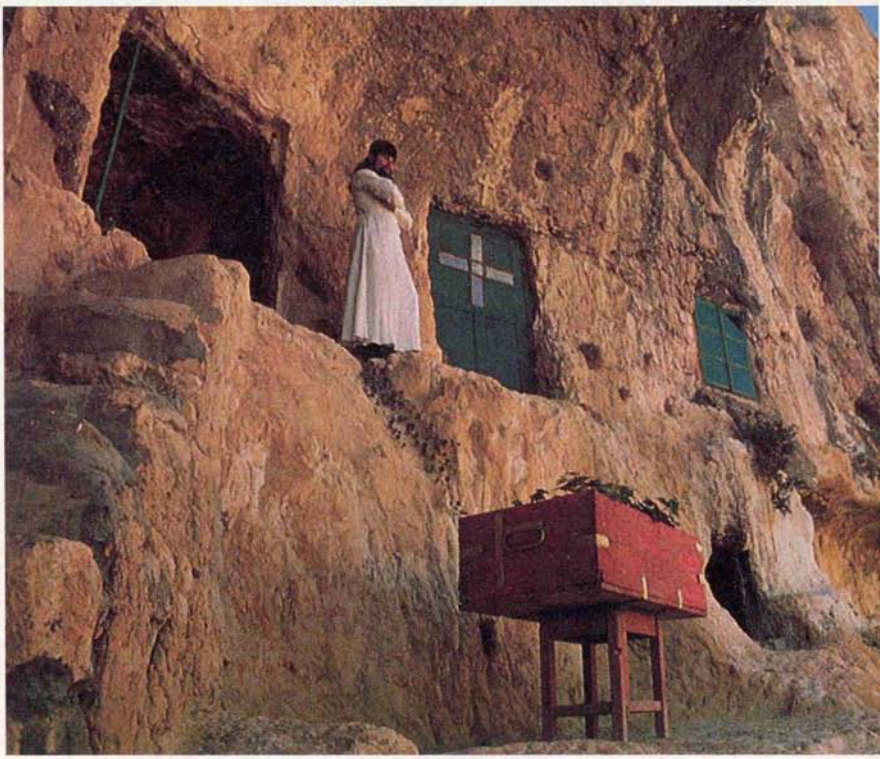
But it was the Greek philosophers who really perfected and articulated these fundamental concepts. Plato was perhaps their number-one proponent. Concerning the idea of an immortal soul, he wrote: "The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that now exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all" (*Meno,* 81).

Unfortunately, as the Greek philosophers looked at it, this "poor soul" had to live here on earth trapped inside a human body. According to Plato: "It is,

(Continued on page 15)

***FOLLOWING** ascetic life-style, monk observes ritual at Wadi Farah (Israel) monastery.*

AC Photo



Traditional Christianity: Scholars and Historians Pinpoint its Basic Problem

H. G. Wells: "The kingdom of God that Jesus of Nazareth had preached was overlaid, as we have explained, almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity, almost from its commencement, ceased to be purely prophetic and creative . . ." (*The Outline of History,* p. 573, by permission of the Estate of H. G. Wells).

Eric Fromm: "The real, historical world no longer needed to change; outwardly everything could remain as it was — state, society, law, economy — for salvation had become an inward, spiritual, unhistorical, individual matter guaranteed by faith in Jesus. The hope for real, historical deliverance was replaced by faith in the already complete spiritual deliverance Christians no longer looked to the future or to history, but, rather, they looked backward" (*The Dogma of Christ,* pp. 58-59).

G. P. Fedotov: "Practically the whole of Byzantine religion could have been built without the historical Christ of the Gospels The divine, glorified Christ is, certainly, the main object of the Byzantine cult — together with His Mother, the Queen of Heaven. Yet, strangely, His earthly life, and His good news of the Kingdom of God, and particularly His teaching, attracted little attention" (*The Russian Religious Mind,* p. 35).

Frederick C. Grant: "As a consequence of this Hellenistic-Roman influence, much of the vast potency of the gospel became neutralised, insulated, and has never been set free to this day" (*Roman Hellenism and the New Testament,* p. 164).

indeed, because of these affections that today, as in the beginning, a soul comes to be without intelligence at first, when it is bound in a mortal body" (*Timaeus,* 44A-B).

Here was the other side of the Platonic coin — the concept of a mundane, corrupt human body that enslaved a pure, pristine soul. The shame over sex and the human anatomy that originated in Eden was echoed even more clearly in much of this later Hellenistic philosophy. For instance: "That soul, in us, will in its nature stand apart from all that can cause any of the evils which man does or suffers; for all such evil, as we have seen, belongs only to the Animate, the Couplement" (Plotinus, *Enneads,* I.1.9).

Since the body and material things were considered evil, a person's chief aim in life, according to these ancient philosophers, was to escape the clutches of this world. Man's aspirations, hopes and dreams were to be found in otherworldly goals.

The best way to prepare for this celestial calling was to devote oneself to a quiet life of sober contemplation and thought. The pursuit of higher "spiritual" knowledge became an end in itself. According to one ancient Greek sage: "The philosopher as priest of the God who is over all things must abstain from flesh meat and always strive to come near to God, solitary to solitary" (James Shiel, *Greek Thought and the Rise of Christianity,* p. 37).

Numerous religious cults grew and thrived in this atmosphere of Hellenistic dualism. Their primary concern largely centered around achievement of personal salvation for their votaries and disciples. Not only was ascetic self-denial emphasized, but also the importance of inner knowledge, or *gnosis.* Mystery religions flourished as men sought to achieve inner tranquility, peace and deliverance.

A Radical Departure

Into this Hellenized environment came Jesus Christ of Nazareth, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. The main thrust of His message had to do with an earthly kingdom — not an escape to the nether reaches of spiritual Nirvanaland. Instead of speaking in vague dialectic and dualistic concepts, he taught simple, direct principles of ethics and morals. He was continually at loggerheads with the religious establishment in Palestine, took a dim view of their bur-

densome, man-made traditions, and was not afraid to castigate them for their religious hypocrisy (Matt. 23; Luke 18:10-14).

After Christ's departure, the early Church was initially highly successful in propagating His gospel. But it wasn't long before many of the Jewish and Hellenistic elements of society were up in arms over the impact of His message. Their reaction was so violent that Stephen was stoned to death by an incensed group of Jewish religious leaders. James was martyred by Herod, and Paul met violent resistance in Asia Minor on two separate occasions when he threatened to burst the bubble of local pagan divinities. He was mocked by Stoics and Epicureans at Mars Hill, and in Thessalonica was accused of "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

Fading Back Into Normalcy

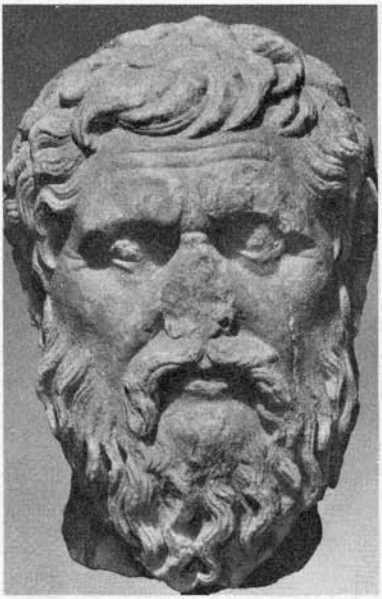
Under such circumstances something was bound to give. As the early apostles passed from the scene, the visible church began to accommodate itself to many of the Hellenistic philosophies and doctrines then in vogue. Some felt such a maneuver was essential for the future survival of Christianity.

According to Arnold Toynbee: "Even Christianity might have found it hard to make headway in the Hellenic world if it had not, like its competitors, presented itself in Hellenic dress" (*Hellenism,* p. 277). Toynbee went on to say: "The Christian propagandists of the second century sought to commend Christianity to the educated minority of the Hellenic public by presenting it as the crown of all known philosophic systems. And this minority could not be won for Christianity without translating Christian beliefs into Hellenic philosophy's technical terminology . . ." (*ibid.,* p. 228).

Edwin Hatch, author of *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity,* also described this process: "It was impossible for Greeks, educated as they were with an education which penetrated their whole nature, to receive or to retain Christianity in its primitive simplicity" (p. 49).

So the process of Hellenization began in earnest. Visible Christianity took on a completely different form as Greek elements flooded into the visible church.

James Shiel explains what happened: "On their [the Greek's] conversion many of them retained current preoccupation with the religious concept of 'salvation,' mingled



Basel Museum Photo

PLATO *(c. 428-348 B.C.)*

with a host of similar concepts from the Oriental mystery religions. Salvation was to be achieved by perfect knowledge (*gnosis*). They insisted that there were hidden truths in the Scriptures which only the true Gnostic could discern" (*op. cit.*, p. 51).

The heavy influence of Greek philosophical concepts on Christianity was also apparent from the writings of the post-apostolic fathers. Origen, for instance, even urged that Hellenistic philosophy be used as a basic primer for Christianity: "I am therefore very desirous that you should accept such parts even of Greek philosophy as may serve for the ordinary elementary instruction of our schools, and be a kind of preparation for Christianity" (*Philocalia of Origen*, p. 57).

Clement of Alexandria echoed these sentiments: "The philosophy of the Greeks, partial and particular though it is, contains the basic elements of that genuine and perfect *knowledge* which is higher than human, which is engaged upon purely intellectual objects, even upon those spiritual objects which eye has not seen. . . . until they were made plain to us Christians by our Great Teacher . . ." (Shiel, *op. cit.*, p. 3).

Compromise and Defeat

Visible Christianity was well on the way to becoming just another version of a modern, updated Oriental mystery religion. Elaborate ceremonies were instituted, an intellectual priestly caste began to assert itself, and esoteric doctrines were kept back from the multitudes. Many of the major tenets of competing pagan religions readily found a safe haven within the walls of a changing Christianity.

Pagan divinities were transformed into Christian saints, martyrs and angels. The cult of



Ron Sower — AC

***DEMONS** guard entrance to the Buddhist Temple of the Dawn in Bangkok, Thailand.*

the Oriental mother goddess was revitalized in the veneration of the Virgin Mary. And pagan temples were often transformed into "Christian" houses of worship.

Hellenistic dualism centered around the concept of an immortal soul; and an evil, corrupt material creation loomed large in post-apostolic thinking. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas also drew deeply from these same philosophical wells. Augustine was probably the staunchest advocate of Greek otherwordly concepts since the Stoics. Writing in *The City of God,* he was quick to eulogize ascetic ideals: "For that vision of God is the beauty of a vision so great and is so infinitely desirable that Plotinus does not hesitate to say that he who enjoys all other blessings in abundance and has not this is supremely miserable" (book X, chapter 16).

Aquinas, for instance, took a dim view of earthly pleasure. In his monumental *Summa Theologica,* he wrote: "The religious state requires the removal of whatever hinders man from devoting himself entirely to God's service. Now the use of sexual union hinders the mind from giving itself wholly to the ser-

vice of God" (p. 655). He continued: "First, as regards the practice of perfection, a man is required to remove from himself whatever may hinder his affections from tending wholly to God. . . . Such hindrances are First, the attachment to external goods, which is removed by a vow of poverty; secondly, the concupiscence of sensible pleasures, chief among which are sexual pleasures, and these are removed by the vow of continence . . ." (p. 659).

A Remarkable Transformation

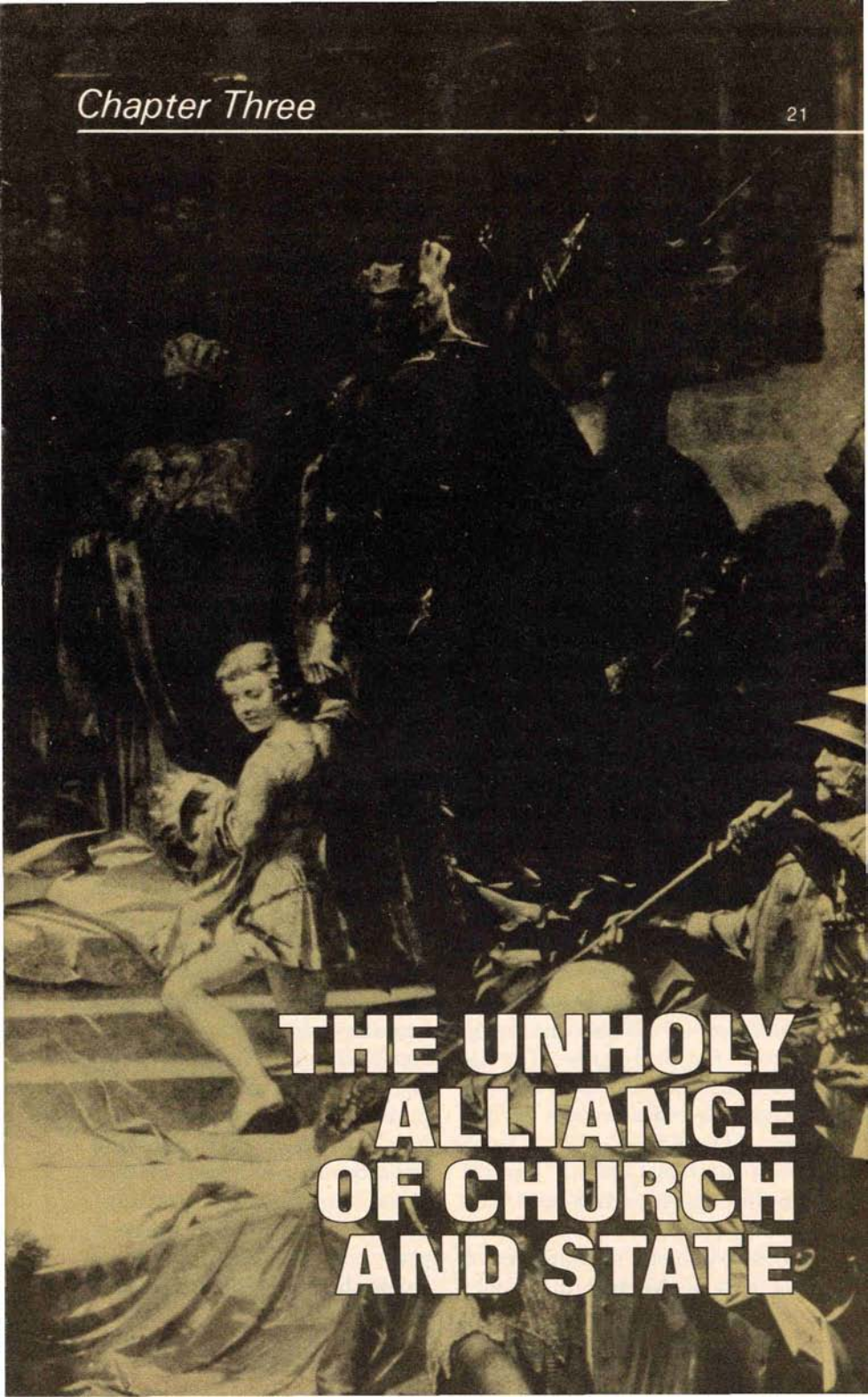
Long before Augustine and Aquinas got around to writing their weighty tomes, the established Christian church had lost whatever little resemblance it had borne to the early church of Paul and the Apostles. The Sermon on the Mount had given way to the Nicene Creed. Christian communities periodically became more agitated over tortuous and involved dogmas on the identity of God and largely ignored the simpler teachings of the man from Nazareth. The Messianic hope of a world under the rule of Jesus Christ had been abandoned in favor of a gospel of otherworldly escape.

Christianity had triumphed as the state religion of the Roman Empire, but the question of who had really been converted to what still remained. As Edward Gibbon put it: "The victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals." About all that visible Christianity had in common with Jesus Christ was the use of His name. The revolutionary impact of His teaching had long since vanished into the mists of pagan philosophy.

In effect, the established Christian churches have adopted a totally different posture from the one intended by Jesus Christ. The long-term effects are still with us to this day. And the implications for society have been tragic, to say the least.

Perhaps Frederick C. Grant (a leading Protestant theologian) best sums up why this has become the fundamental dilemma of modern religion: "As G. K. Chesterton said, 'Christianity has not failed — it has never been tried.' And this is the tragedy, that a gospel meant for the healing of the nations accepted a lesser role and became only one more of 'the world's great religions,' leaving Hatred, War, Greed, Hunger, and Misery still the permanent rulers of mankind" (*Roman Hellenism and the New Testament,* p. 171).


Ullstein



THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE

As we saw in the last chapter, it doesn't take very much to lead people down the primrose path of ecclesiastical error. And while false religion can certainly make life miserable for some, there is a limit to the mischief it can do if only a few isolated individuals recognize its authority and power. But things take on much more ominous overtones when religious rigmarole becomes accepted on an organized, established basis — especially when it becomes the recognized religion of a state, nation, or empire.

The problem had its beginnings with the earliest civilizations. It seems that when men first began to organize into local city-states the obvious question of "Who's in charge here?" naturally arose. The answer usually came in a very straightforward way — by the use of brute force.

In most instances it was the local hunter-turned-hero (for example, Nimrod — see Genesis 10:8) who had the most going for him in this regard; namely, a monopoly on most of the local weaponry. And back then, superior weaponry a kingdom did make. According to Lewis Mumford: "This unscrupulous use of the weapons of the hunt to control the political and economic activities of whole communities was one of the effective inventions of kingship" (*The Myth of the Machine,* p. 169).

The Power of a Persuasive Priesthood

But something more was required in addition to a simple show of strength. The ordinary citizen had to be convinced that the hunting-hero-turned-king was God's chosen representative and thus worthy of high devotion. That's why an organized, state-approved religion was a must. As Mumford put it: "The agency that effected this change . . . was the product of a coalition between the tribute-exacting hunting chieftain and the keepers of an important religious shrine. Without that combination . . . the claims that the new rulers made to unconditional obedience to their king's superior will could not have been established: it took extra, supernatural authority, derived from a god or group of gods, to make kingship prevail throughout a large society"

(*ibid.*, p. 170). In return, the king made sure his compliant priests were amply rewarded for their undivided and loyal support. They received stipends from the government treasury, lived in the best houses, and had a major voice in local political affairs.

Once established in power, the local chieftain and his ecclesiastical cronies could never stand still. They often found it necessary to lock horns with competing powers from neighboring city-states. A continual game of "king of the spiritual mountain" ensued as rival religions struggled for the sole dominion of subject populations.

The ancient church-state establishment also had other reasons for warring with nearby kingdoms. Often there was a critical manpower shortage in the local temple, and it could only be fulfilled by tapping foreign sources. Sacrificial victims were also needed to placate the angry deities. While these often came from the local population (see Jeremiah 7:31; II Kings 16:3; 17:31), prisoners of war were also looked on as welcome additions.

This type of church-state combination undoubtedly reached one of its high points during the period of the mighty Babylonian Empire. The Babylonian temple, according to Isaac Mendelsohn, "was the largest landowner, the greatest industrialist, the richest banker, and the biggest slaveholder in every city of the country. Its landholdings . . . included in addition to the temple precinct, large tracts of land outside of it . . ." (*Slavery in the Ancient Near East*, p. 100). Forced state worship was often the order of the day — as Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel discovered the hard way (Daniel 3).

"The functions of the Church were now to promote the security of the state The carpenter of Galilee had replaced Romulus and Mars as the guardian of the Empire, and the revolutionary implications of his teaching had been rendered innocuous."

Church and State in Transition

The same basic system refined by the Babylonians continued under the sway of Persian, Greek and Roman rulers (see Daniel 7:1-7, 17; 8:20-22). But as the Roman

(Continued on page 27)



The Medieval Inquisition: Religious Terror at its Worst

Essentially, the Inquisition of the Middle Ages was a heavy-handed attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to preserve its religious monopoly over the minds of men. Medieval Catholic dogma had zero tolerance for the "church-of-your-choice" concept. There was only one legitimate church and the individual better believe it or else! Unfortunately, some chose not to believe and therein lay the problem. The idea that a man might exercise his own intellect and free moral agency was anathema in those days.

The Albigenses of Southern France were one such group who broke from the fold in the late 1100s. Within short order they found themselves the target of a full-fledged Papal Crusade (pictured above). In 1209 a Catholic-led army sacked the town of Beziers with disastrous results. Crusaders forced open doors of churches and then proceeded to hack to pieces those who had sought refuge inside. Corpses were stacked up by the thousands as men and

women, babies and invalids were butchered outright. Over two hundred staunch "heretics" in the neighboring city of Montsegur had their trial by fire. They were dragged from the city and incinerated in one massive funeral pyre. In Toulouse, an old bedridden woman thought to be a heretic was hauled out of bed to meet her fiery death. According to one account of the incident: " 'This done,' Pehlhisson tells us, 'the Bishop, together with the monks and their attendants, returned to the refectory and, after giving thanks to God and St. Dominic, fell cheerfully upon the food set before them' " (*Massacre at Montsegur,* p. 291).

Few voices were raised in protest against these gruesome inhumanities. Granted, no one outside the established church would have been heard, but the remarkable part is that there were hardly any vigorous objections from within.

Some two hundred years later, the same type of terror began in Spain. But times had changed and the Spanish inquisitors now had at their disposal new and sophisticated tools for turning up heretics. The sudden knock on the door in the middle of the night was one ploy they used very effectively. Like the Nazis of World War II, they too had a special penchant for persecuting members of the Jewish race. Communities were constantly under surveillance in order to turn up any telltale signs of Jewish activities. Sharp-eyed clerics were always on the lookout for even the slightest hint of Sabbath-keeping. One friar is said to have climbed out on a rooftop on Saturday morning in order to observe which houses had no smoke coming from their chimneys.

The inquisitors also kept a firm hand on the intellectual activities of their faithful. All vernacular translations of the Bible were strictly banned. So was any literature with an anti-Catholic bias, or any other religious works written in the common language.

Inquisitors often gave the populace a period of grace when they set foot in a particular locale. People who came forward voluntarily during the time would receive a much lighter sentence. But in order to prove his sincerity the individual was often asked to inform on friends, relatives and neighbors. So great was the fear these terror tactics inspired, that people often came forward on their own volition — not wishing to first be incriminated by someone else.

The inquisitors had sterner measures in store for those few stubborn souls who would not recant. The excruciating pain of the rack, water torture or suspension by the wrists often worked wonders on

these hard-to-crack cases. For those incorrigible wretches who persisted in their free thinking, there was only one remedy — the stake.

The inquisitors carried out this ultimate penalty in ceremonies known as the *auto-da-fé* ("act of faith"). They usually took place on Sunday in order that more people would be around to witness the final end of those who dared transgress the dictates of the church. The night before, the impenitent heretics were led to the scene of the execution and informed of their fate. However, the inquisitors always managed to throw in one last sop. If the poor reprobate could muster up a last-minute confession he would be able to forego the trial by fire. But the only difference was that he would be strangled to death just as the flames were lit.

On the following day, the black-hooded inquisitors accompanied their charges to the ceremony. The dominicans continued their efforts of the previous day in exhorting these unfortunates to make a last-minute confession — ostensibly to demonstrate to the public the merciful nature of the inquisition. Mass was celebrated, a sermon preached, and then the clergy went through the sham of turning their victims over to the state for execution.

One author painted a poignant picture of what happened as the flames went up: "The people shout their approval; the Inquisitors sit, hands folded, deeply shocked by all the wickedness in the world, serene in their own virtue, in bringing about justice, so clever that — although they have brought those groaning, fainting men and women to this horror — because they abandoned them in time to the secular arm, there is no blood on their hands. . . ."

The same author went on to say: "The long ceremony, the chanting of monks, the tolling of bells, the smell of incense, the holiness of the proceedings has a comforting effect. All has been sanctified by these things" (Jean Plaidy, *The Rise of the Spanish Inquisition*, p. 158).

The same brutal methods were tried in the Spanish Netherlands with much the same results. During the height of the Inquisition in that country, the Emperor Maximillian asked the head of Spain, Phillip II, to put an end to the brutality. Phillip's reply bears repeating: "What I have done has been for the repose of the Provinces, and for the defense of the Catholic Faith. Nor would I do otherwise than I have done, though I should risk the sovereignty of the Netherlands — no, though the world should fall around me in ruins" (Plaidy, *The End of the Spanish Inquisition*, p. 21).

Empire began to disintegrate, a significant change took place. The pagan faiths of the Empire were being thrown into basic disarray and something was needed to fill the resulting spiritual vacuum. Fortunately for Rome, a Hellenized, paganized religion known as Christianity was just coming into its own. The need for assimilation was imperative. According to Toynbee: "A godless Empire would be as savourless and sapless as an Athens without her Athena. The secession of the Gods must be retrieved; the divine powers must be enticed back again into the shrines which they had so alarmingly deserted; and since, meanwhile they had insisted upon assuming a Christian guise, the only recourse for the Empire now, in face of the accomplished fact of this metamorphosis, was to reverse its outward policy [nonrecognition of the church] . . . the broken unity must be restored in another way by the bold diplomatic counterstroke of taking the Christian Church bodily to the Empire's bosom" (*A Study of History,* vol. IV, p. 349).

A counterfeited Christianity had no trouble accomplishing this type of imperial transformation. The Pantheon at Rome became a Christian church, basilicas were redone as Christian houses of worship, and the Imperial title of Pontifex Maximus was later assumed by the head of the Church in Rome.

As one leading historian aptly stated: "The chief functions of the Church were now to promote the security and prosperity of the secular state by assuring it of divine favor and protection, and to guide its members to heaven in the afterlife. The carpenter of Galilee had replaced Romulus and Mars as the guardian of the Empire, and the revolutionary implications of his teaching had been rendered innocuous" (Henry Bamford Parkes, *The Divine Order,* p. 46).

Tightening the Screws of Church Power

As the Empire in the West grew weaker, the church began to pick up political momentum. Its internal hierarchical structure came to be closely patterned after that of the decaying Roman Empire. Canon law was often derived from imperial jurisprudence.

According to Mumford: "It [the church] tended to take over the tyrannical powers of the empire itself." Under the ecclesiastical umbrella of the church, society took on a very structured, stratified configura-

tion. The clergy and those devoted to a life of abstinence and celibacy were looked upon as a privileged class. Emphasis was placed on rank, status, and the rule of the church hierarchy.

Problems were usually resolved by an appeal to authority rather than with the exercise of any individual initiative. There was no incentive to look for new solutions, ideas, or experiment with creative innovations. The feeling was that every question already had an answer; all one had to do was find it.

Rulers were no longer to blame for wretched economic or social conditions. If any one was at fault, it was the complaining individual. Suffering and misery, according to the theology of the day, were necessary in order for man to atone for his guilt in this life. Inevitably, the oppressed multitudes became resigned to a world they could not change.

With such a heavy emphasis on personal guilt, the church came up with an ideal solution: the priestly confessional. As it



Matson Photo Service

BIRS NIMRUD, *traditional site of the Tower of Babel, from whence state-approved religion originated.*

turned out, the confessional doubled both as a so-called means of personal expiation for the faithful, while serving the clergy as an effective tool for keeping the flock in line.

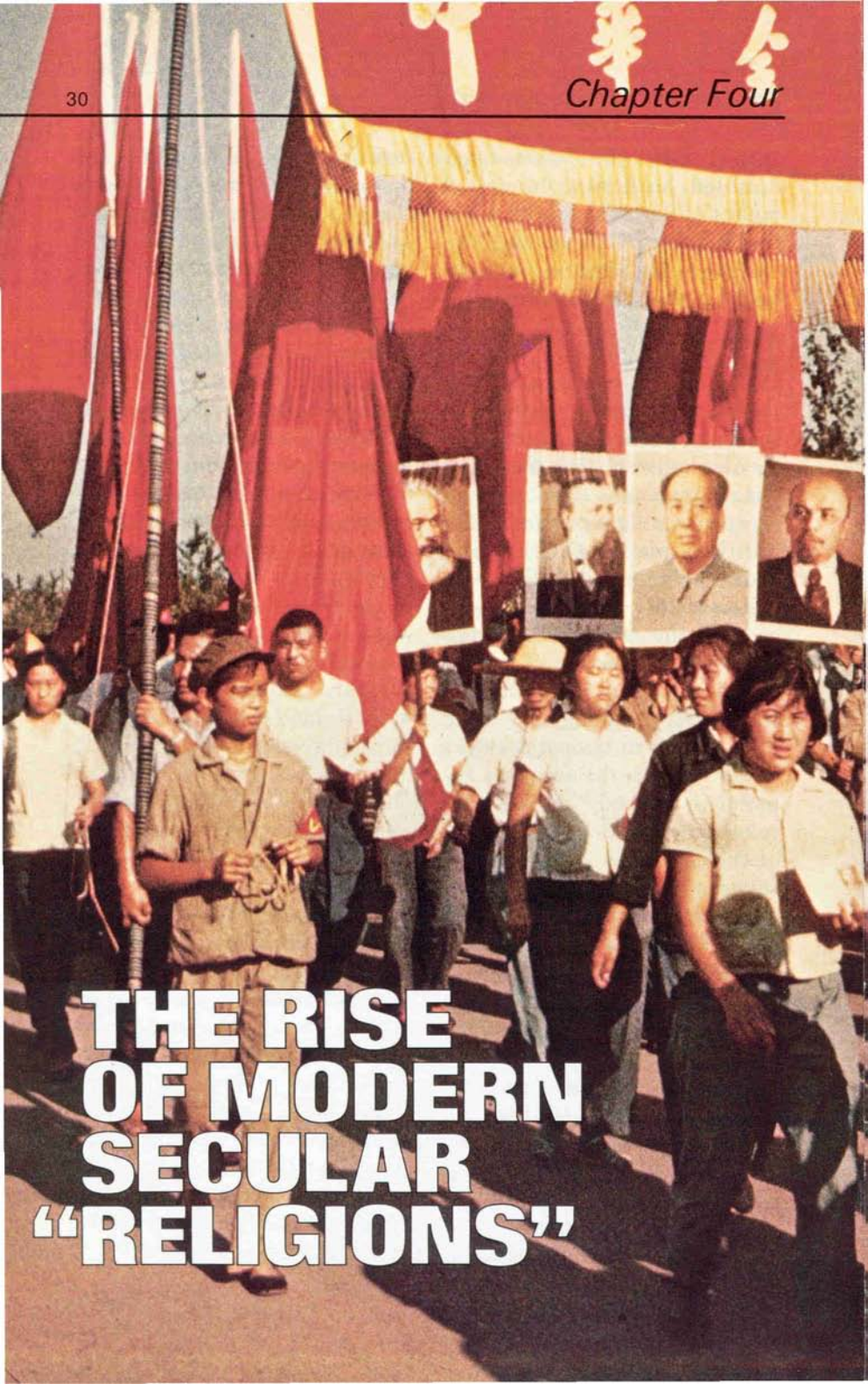
Reversing Church-State Relationship

Not content to maintain the role of spiritual supporter of secular power, the medieval church under the Papacy began to assume a bigger share of the political pie in the Empire. Ironically, the Hellenistic otherworldly doctrines concerning the superiority of the soul over the body was part of medieval church canonists' rationale for claiming increasing prerogatives in temporal affairs of state. Since the soul was superior to the body, by the same token the ecclesiastical power of the Pope was thought to be superior to the temporal power of the Emperor. The temporal exists for the sake of the spiritual. Earthly princes could only claim power here on earth. The Papacy could claim it in heaven as well.

Not only was the Pope considered the vicar of God on earth, but in some quarters he was considered His *successor.* Therefore, to resist the command of the Pope was construed as the equivalent of resisting God. "In short, the supreme pontiff was to possess complete and exclusive jurisdiction over spiritual and temporal affairs of the whole world. Papal plentitude of power embraced every conceivable aspect of human life" (*Medieval Papalism,* p. 107).

Using this line of reasoning, medieval Popes were considered to have the right and authority to demand support from secular rulers. And they weren't hesitant about using it. The Papacy's initial calls for crusades to the Holy Land were received with enthusiastic support throughout virtually all of Western Christendom. Likewise, Rome's repeated demands for suppression of "dangerous" heretics resulted in the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. In all these "holy" endeavors there was close cooperation between church and state.

Unfortunately (from the church's standpoint), this cosy state of affairs couldn't last. Secular kings and princes grew restive under the staid and heavy-handed sway of the medieval Papacy. Fresh winds of change were blowing across the Western world. Forthcoming events would soon shatter the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church and bring to birth new religions and ideologies.



THE RISE OF MODERN SECULAR "RELIGIONS"



Henri Cartier Bresson, Magnum Photos

With the advent of the Protestant Reformation, the virtual religious monopoly the Roman Catholic Church had enjoyed for centuries came to a sudden, dramatic end. But the Reformation brought with it more than a loss of spiritual power for the Papacy. It also cost the church much of the political clout it had managed to accumulate over the years.

In many parts of Europe, national sovereigns used the ferment of the Reformation as additional leverage to assist them in breaking free from the clutches of Rome. The head of state suddenly found himself replacing the Pope in the eyes of his subjects as the one supreme ruler on earth. Now it was the king or prince, not the Pope, who was "God's representative."

To Be Kingly Is Divine

So began the concept of the "divine right of kings." The king was God's anointed on earth. To oppose his will was considered nothing short of blasphemous.

And post-Reformation kings were not a bit hesitant when it came to making pretentious claims. Louis XIV called himself the "Sun King" and asserted, "I am the state." His successor, Louis XV, also wasn't ashamed to boast: "Sovereignty lies in me alone. The legislative power is mine unconditionally and indivisibly. The public order emanates from me, and I am its supreme guardian. My people is one with me."

With the king and not the church claiming all the political marbles, the nature of warfare in the Western world took on an entirely different complexion. The bitter religious battles formerly fought between Catholic and Protestant (see insert on pages 34 and 35) were now replaced by wars of kings. Military campaigns were often launched merely to determine a hotly contested question of royal succession. The average subject watched much of this monarchial maneuvering with somewhat detached indifference.

The Modern State Enshrined

But the advent of the French Revolution changed all this. The religious affections of the individual citizen again underwent a fundamental change. The issue of popular sovereignty dramatically demolished

people's faith in the divine-right concept. In its place emerged the inflaming idea of popular democratic rule. Government of the people became the crusading cry of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century man.

In this respect the French Revolution had significant and far-reaching implications. According to Alexis DeTocqueville: "'No previous political upheaval, however violent, had aroused such passionate enthusiasm, for the French Revolution set before it was not merely a change in the French social system but nothing short of a regeneration of the whole human race. It created an atmosphere of missionary fervor and, indeed, assumed all the aspects of a religious revival.'

"Thus, according to DeTocqueville, the French Revolution, though ostensibly political in origin, functioned on the lines, and assumed many of the aspects of a religious revolution" (*The Old Regime and the French Revolution,* pp. 12-13).

Now it was no longer the king or the Papacy that was as "god on earth," but the nation. As Lewis Mumford put it: "If a religion consists of the beliefs and hopes for which men, when challenged, will sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the assurance of participating in a greater life, then nationalism was the vital religion of the nineteenth century . . . it seized men, for a century or more, with a fanatical passion similar to that which Christianity had once stirred" (*Condition of Man,* p. 356).

Launching a Secular Crusade

Like its ecclesiastical predecessors, this new brand of nationalistic religion was not one to stand still. It, in effect, sought to fill the ecumenical gap left by the partial demise of Roman Catholicism after the Protestant Reformation. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, numerous wars had already been fought in an attempt to "convert" the nondemocratic "heathen."

The conduct of these national skirmishes had also undergone a fundamental change. Armed conflict was no longer the "Sport of Kings." Now countries clashed in grim earnest over the newly enshrined ideals of democracy and nationalism. Wars fought in the name of democracy demanded virtually total participation on the part of a nation's populace.

Relatively small mercenary forces were suddenly replaced by massed multitudes of newly conscripted citizens. According

(Continued on page 38)



The Bloody Religious Battles of the 16th and 17th Centuries

During the period immediately following the Protestant Reformation, religious tolerance in Europe reached one of its all-time historic lows. In view of some of the major goals of the Reformation, this was somewhat ironic. Ostensibly, men had bolted from the rule of Roman Catholicism in order to escape the stifling effects of its narrow-minded medieval mentality. But religious toleration turned out to be the short suit of the Reformation as well.

According to one religious historian: "We are told that the Protestant Revolution ultimately favored the growth of tolerance and even of rationalism. Perhaps this is true, but its immediate result was a great stimulation of heresy-hunting all over Europe" (Leo Markum, *Mrs. Grundy*, p. 34).

Smaller Protestant sects were some of the principal victims of this heightened wave of religious frenzy. In 1535 leaders of the Ana-

baptist Church were publicly tortured and then killed in Munster, Germany, in an effort to stamp out what many Protestants and Catholics considered to be a dangerous heretical movement.

Several years later, Unitarians fleeing from the wrath of Rome literally walked from the frying pan into the fire when they arrived in the Calvinistic stronghold of Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin, himself, had their leader, Michael Servetus, burned at the stake for denying the trinitarian theory (which, incidentally, is another major myth of mainline Christianity; for information on this subject, write for our free booklet *Is God a Trinity?*).

Religious passions ran anywhere from hot to torrid during this period. Witch-hunting broke all previous records. More than 10,000 people perished in Germany alone during the height of this craze.

The British Isles also found that the religious violence which had infected the Continent was quite contagious. Henry VIII had both Catholics and Lutherans burned and beheaded for so-called acts of heresy. Bloody Mary duly earned her famous nickname when she made an abortive attempt to re-Catholicize England. And Cromwell, the Lord Protector, didn't protect many Catholics when his armies sacked the city of Drogheda, Ireland. Civilians were massacred in the streets and no quarter was given to the clergy. Friars and priests there died almost to a man.

In France, church and state combined to make life unbearable for the Huguenots. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 was perhaps the crowning achievement of their efforts. Ten thousand Protestants lost their lives in Paris, and in the ensuing weeks the carnage spread to the outlying regions of the country. In 1577, Henry III tried to alleviate some of the persecution, only to be driven from the capital for his efforts. By 1643, moderation prevailed temporarily. The Huguenots were militarily and politically disenfranchised, but allowed to retain their freedom of conscience. Even this concession was too much for the French Catholic clergy. They embarked on a campaign of forced conversions and deprivation of civil liberties that eventually forced more than 250,000 Protestants to flee France.

Most of this sectarian insanity culminated in the Thirty Years' War, which, before it was over, involved every major nation in Continental Europe. Germany became the sacrificial lamb and the common battleground for the warring contestants. By the end of the war her cities were in ruins, many of her villages were deserted, and her economy almost prostrate.



Faulkner — AC

The Civil Religion of America

Its money says, "In God We Trust." In its pledge of allegiance are the words "one nation under God." Over 90 percent of its population indicates belief in a supreme being. The bulk of its people are nominally Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish.

A religious country? Certainly.

But is all this where America's *real* religion is at? Or is it merely ecclesiastical window dressing? If it is, then where do many of her people place their faith, loyalty and trust? And is there such a thing as an American *civil religion?*

Consider what Michael Novak, a prominent political writer, had to say on this subject: "Whether we like or dislike the notion, however, every national state generates a civil religion. For a state is not solely a pragmatic, administrative agency. It is also, necessarily, a symbolic agency. The chief officers of the state perform priestly and prophetic roles, conduct huge public liturgies, constantly reinterpret the nation's fundamental documents and traditions, furnish the central terms of public discourse" (*Choosing Our King,* p. 302).

In this regard, America is no exception. U.S. citizens frequently see bumper stickers that say "America — love it or leave it." They also hear prominent politicians intoning: "It is time to renew our faith in America." The slogan "new order of the ages" appears in Latin on its dollar bills. And U.S. citizens frequently hear about the "American way of life," which in itself is somewhat interesting because religion *is* a way of life.

According to Will Herberg, a leading religious writer, this phrase has particularly significant overtones: "Spiritually, the American Way of Life is best expressed in a certain kind of 'idealism' which has come to be recognized as characteristically American. It is a faith that has its symbols and its rituals, its holidays and its liturgy, its saints and its sancta; and it is a faith that every American, to the degree that he is an American, knows and understands" (*Protestant, Catholic, Jew, an Essay in American Religious Sociology,* p. 92).

Norman Mailer also made a penetrating observation concerning this American brand of civil religion during the 1972 Democratic Convention: "In America, the country was the religion. And all the religions of the land were fed from that first religion which was the country itself, and if the other religions were now full of mutation and staggering across deserts of faith, it was because the country had been false and ill and corrupt for years . . . corrupt to the point of terminal disease, like a great religion floundering" (*St. George and the Godfather,* p. 87).

Faith in America and democracy rather than God has been the main driving force behind most of the nation's endeavors. When the United States took up arms during World War I, her rallying cry centered around the ideological concept of making the world safe for democracy. Essentially the same motivation was present during the Second World War and subsequent conflicts.

In view of the limited ability of the democratic ideology to solve the nation's growing problems, perhaps Americans and other Westerners would do well to re-evaluate the real sources of their civil religion. And perhaps we would also do well to take to heart an ancient prophecy found in the book of Jeremiah: "But my people have forgotten me, they burn incense to false gods" (Jer. 18:15-16). And also Isaiah: "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand. . . . They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged" (Isa. 1:3-4).

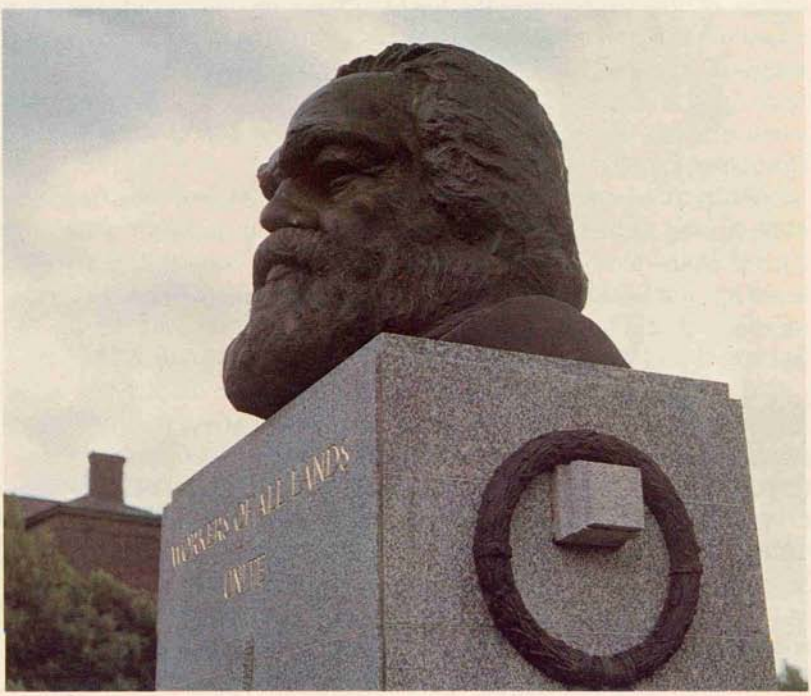
to Robert Leckie, the military draft "actually . . . was the handmaiden of the new religion of Democracy" (*Warfare*, p. 17). Napoleon was one of the first military leaders to capitalize on this emerging national religious fervor. His famed legions swept over continental Europe under the banners of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Under his rule France found it possible to field armies of half a million men and more.

The Mission of Marx

While the Western world was going through the throes of this nationalistic turmoil, another equally potent secular religious movement was beginning to make its first stirrings. It basically came out of the mind of a disgruntled German political organizer who popularized words such as "proletariat," "bourgeois" and "dialectical."

Although its founders would undoubtedly have taken strong exception to such "blasphemous" religious labels, Marxism was as bona fide a

***KARL MARX'S** tomb in London cemetery. Inscription reads: "Workers of all lands unite."*



faith as could be found within the walls of any Western ecclesiastical institution. It was a religion for the oppressed masses — the working man. It promised ultimate deliverance, its own form of Utopia (the dictatorship of the proletariat); and its mission was to convert all of humanity. *Das Kapital* was its Bible; the proletariat, the savior of the world; and the beastly bourgeoisie were equivalent to the devil. Their church was the Communist Party; dialectical materialism was their ideological god; Marx, their first prophet; and Lenin, their high priest and messiah.

What Marxism needed in order to grow and germinate was a favorable religious climate. Ironically, it found such fertile soil in a country even Marx would have least suspected — the Soviet Union.

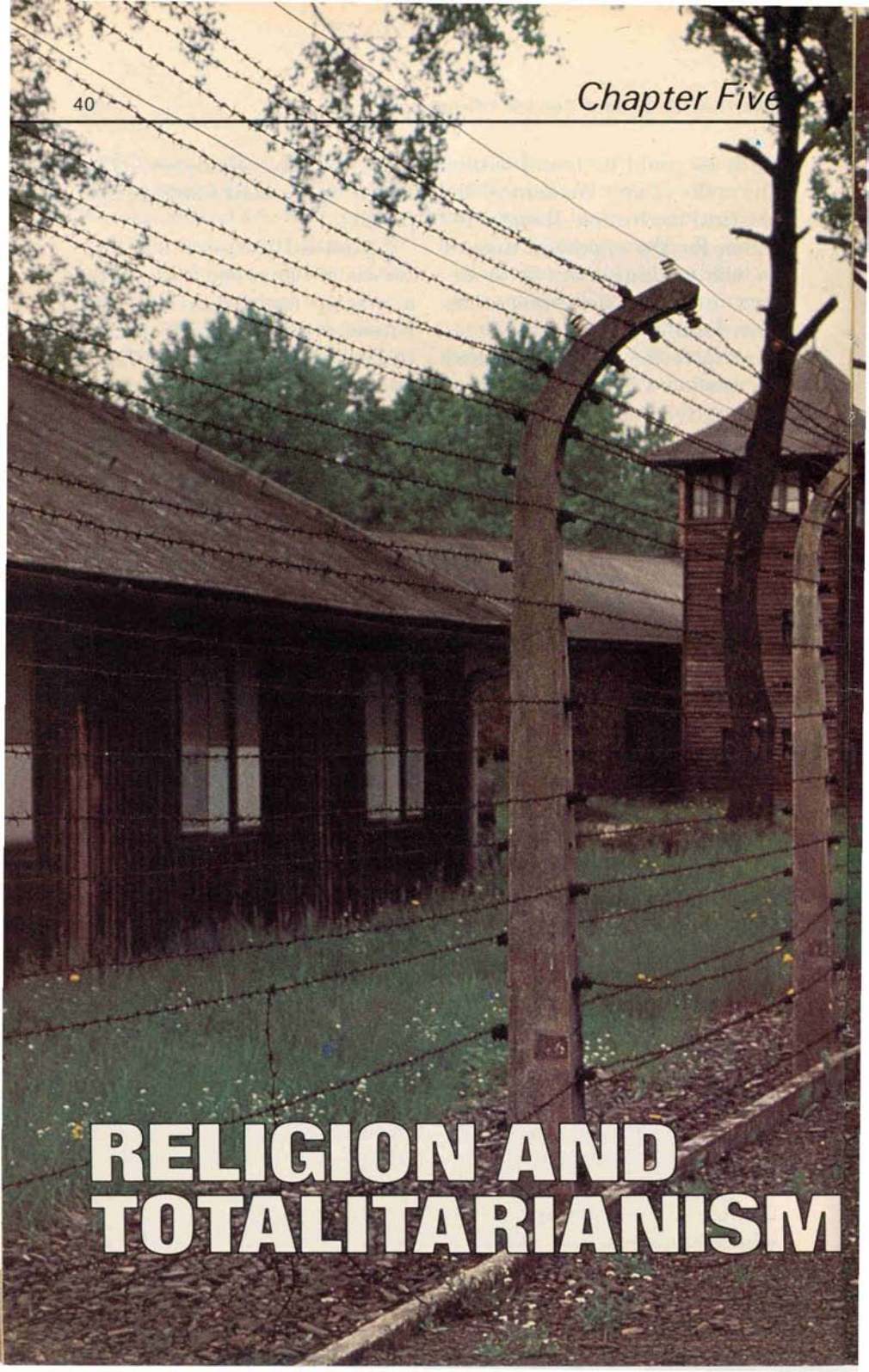
Shifting Doctrinal Gears

The dogma of Lenin and Marx had no trouble carving out a large niche in Russian society. Faith in the tenets of Russian Christendom was easily replaced by faith in those of Marx. "The spirit of the people could very readily pass from one integrated faith to another integrated faith, from one orthodoxy to another orthodoxy which embraced the whole of life" (Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism,* p. 121).

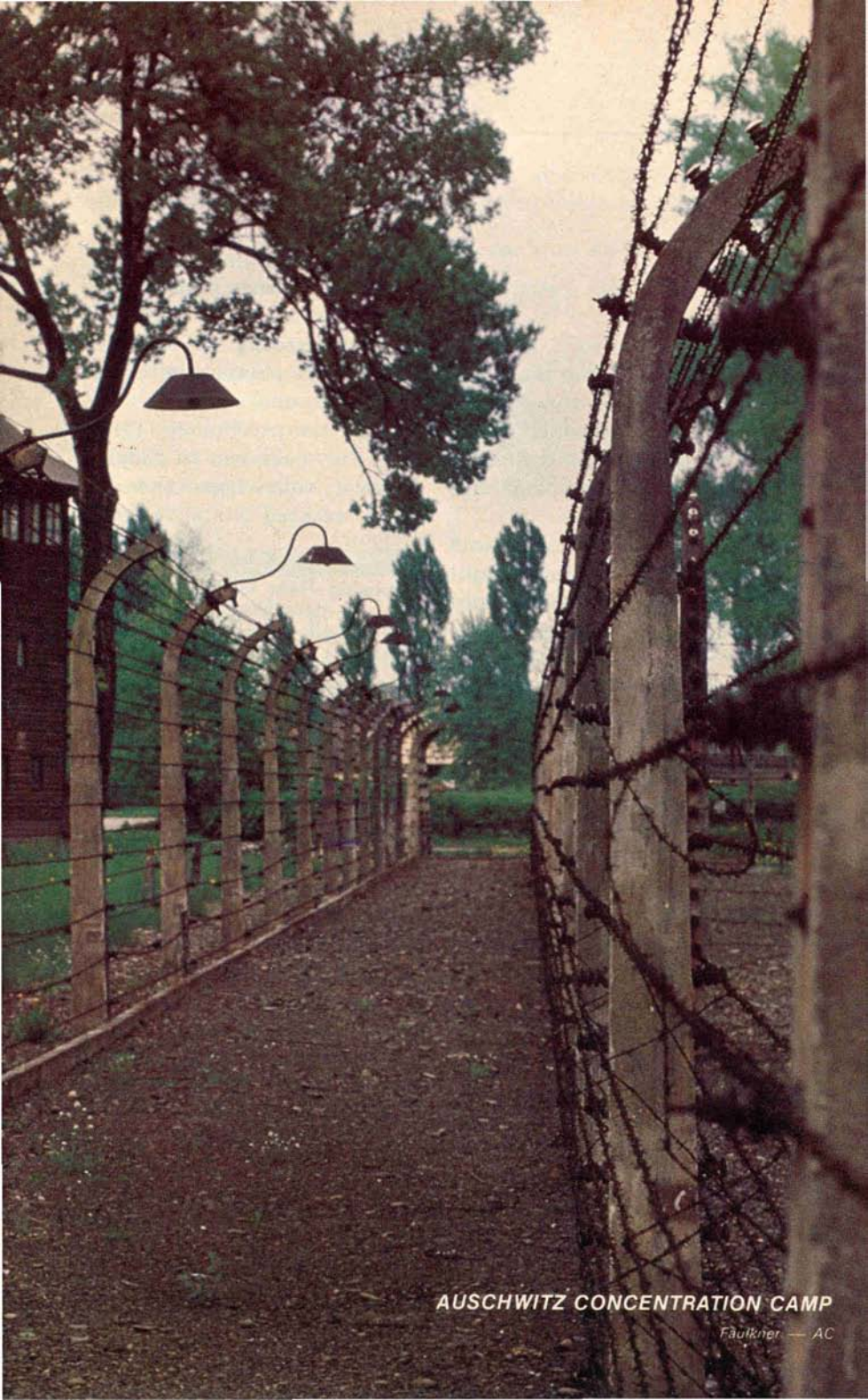
Spiritually speaking, the Russia of Lenin and Stalin bore a strong resemblance to the Russia of the Tsars. According to Berdyaev: "The Soviet Communist realm has in its spiritual structure a great likeness to the Muscovite Orthodox Tsardom" (*ibid.,* p. 143).

The new communist leaders, like their orthodox predecessors, still came on as the champions of the common faith. They felt nothing but disdain and contempt for Western ideals. And they maintained a rigid intolerance for anything that remotely smacked of contrary doctrine. This more than anything else was the most serious shortcoming of the new Russian religion.

Even today, for this very reason, computers in the Soviet Union are looked on with some mistrust. In some quarters it is feared that their impartial data might upset the applecart of some of the pet theories of communistic canons. Unfortunately, such Dark Age religiously based mentality, unless it is changed, can only bode evil for the rest of humanity.



RELIGION AND TOTALITARIANISM



AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP

Faulkner — AC

By the time the Communists had come to power in Russia, another secular faith was beginning its dramatic march through Germany and Central Europe.

After the demoralizing defeat of World War I, the humiliating Treaty of Versailles, and the subsequent inflation and economic collapse, the Germans were ripe for "drastic" change. They had grave doubts about the shaky Weimar Republic, were fearful of some of the social innovations that had taken place during the 1920s, and chaffed in their unaccustomed role as a vanquished nation.

What they needed, according to some, was a political and spiritual reawakening. This was a golden opportunity for an ideological evangelist like Adolf Hitler. He promised the downtrodden Germanic masses a return to the old values and the glittering ideals that once made their nation great.

Hitler's hypnotic message had numerous religious overtones. He spoke of a millennial thousand-year reich, extolled the chosen blond, blue-eyed Aryans, and singled out the Jewish race as the archenemy of all good Teutonic ideals.

Hitler was more of a religious reformer than he was a politician. According to Joachim Fest: "His success with the masses was above all a phenomenon of the psychology of religion. He spoke less to people's political convictions than to their spiritual state" (*Hitler*, p. 329).

Reviving Past Glories

Ironically, there was nothing really all that revolutionary in the racial, nationalistic gospel that Hitler preached. It had its roots embedded deeply in Germanic history. Hitler was in effect simply rekindling the fires of ancient Teutonic and Germanic yearnings that had been smoldering for centuries.

Like the orthodox Russians, the ancient Germans felt themselves to be the chief defenders of the Christian faith, champions of the realm and the master race of medieval Europe. During the heydays of the Holy Roman Empire they wielded the sword while the Papacy tended to matters of the spirit — more or less. As the Empire deteriorated in the south, the Germans in the north had to take up the slack. Naturally,

they took pride in being the last bastion of Imperial virtue in the Empire.

Throughout the middle ages this Teutonic ideal was nourished in many a German breast. Its chauvinistic flavor is well reflected in a sampling of oratory given to the Emperor in the early 1500s: "Our race, on the contrary, was judged worthy of the imperium because of its innate virtue and because of the perseverance with which we took the labors of God upon ourselves. May we, under your aegis, noble emperor, long continue to be worthy of exercising the Roman rule. As virtue and faith are superior to vice and oppression, we who possess virtue and faith are greater than all other nations" (Strauss, *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation,* p. 71). Even after the Reformation and the rise of modern secular states in the West, many Germans still clung to this imperial concept.

Ironically, there was nothing really all that revolutionary in the racial, nationalistic gospel that Hitler preached. It had its roots embedded deeply in Germanic history.

Blood, Iron and Obedience

Historical circumstances also combined to instill in most Germans a deep respect for the state and the authority of their ruler. Luther for one was a staunch defender of the iron-fisted prerogatives of his princely patrons. Long after the Thirty Years' War when England's parliamentary system was well established and French society was about to be transformed by the Revolution, Germany still continued to exist as a disjointed hodgepodge of feudal principalities. The same traditions were also emphasized in Prussia where by sheer discipline, hard work and emphasis on obedience, the Junker aristocracy carved out a mini-empire from a relatively sterile and barren environment.

Much of these "blood-and-iron" concepts were later reflected in the writings and works of men such as Wagner, Fichte, Hegel and Nietzsche. Heavy emphasis was laid on both the idea of the innate superiority of the Germanic race and the all-pervading rule and authority of the state. Hegel, for instance, in his *Philosophy of Right,* had this to say: "The state is the divine will, in the

Adolf Hitler: A Latter-Day Demigod

Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland: "Hitler is lonely. So is God. Hitler is like God" (Wallace R. Deuel, *People Under Hitler*, p. 78). "Hitler has received his authority from God. Therefore he is a champion sent by God, for German right in the world" (Thomas Reveille, *The Spoil of Europe*, p. 58).

Dr. Adolf Rosenberg, Reich minister: "God has revealed himself in Adolf Hitler" (Ernest Jackh, *The War for Man's Soul*, p. 23).

Dr. Robert Ley, head of German Labor Front, in a speech (1937): "And we believe that this Almighty God has sent us Adolph Hitler, so that Germany shall have eternal Security."

Hermann Göring: 'I have no conscience. My conscience is Adolf Hitler" (Walter Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*, p. 76).

Rhenish group of German Christians: "Hitler's word is God's law, the decrees and laws which represent it possess divine authority" (Thomas Reveille, *The Spoil of Europe*, p. 57).

Baldur von Schirach, Hitler Youth leader: "He who serves Germany serves God, and he who serves God serves Germany" (Ernest Jackh, *The War for Man's Soul*, p. 24).

Hans Kerrl, church minister: "The question of the divinity of Christ is ridiculous and inessential. . . . A new authority has arisen as to what Christ and Christianity really are: Adolf Hitler. Hitler is the true Holy Ghost" (Ernest Jackh, *The War for Man's Soul*, p. 23).

Thuringian churchwarden: "Christ has come to us through Adolf Hitler" (Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler*, p. 444).

Words painted on the side of a hill in pre-war Germany: "We believe in Holy Germany. Holy Germany is Hitler! We believe in Holy Hitler!!" (Patsy Ziemer, *Two Thousand and Ten Days of Hitler*, p. 84.)

sense that it is mind present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape and organization of a world" (p. 85).

Such ideas were still alive and well at the turn of the twentieth century. They were widely publicized in the writings of the demented, neurotic H. S. Chamberlain who became an instant favorite with Kaiser Wilhelm II and later with Hitler. Chamberlain was, in fact, often referred to as the "spiritual founder" of National Socialism.

Hitler then simply built on the ideological foundation that had already been laid. According to George L. Mosse, author of *The Crisis of German Ideology:* "Hitler only promised to fulfill a concept of life which had permeated much of the nation before he ever entered the scene" (p. 301). And Joachim Fest likewise painted a very vivid picture of the ideological awakening that took place under the banner of Hitler's nationalistic evangelism: "Once again, they dreamed the faded dreams of their forefathers and hailed a past in whose mists they saw glimmerings of a glorious future of territorial expansion: a new Roman Empire, a Spain of Catholic majesty, a Greater Belgium, Greater Hungary, Greater Finland. Hitler's fling at hegemony, carefully planned, cold-blooded, and realistic as it was, and dependent on the most modern weaponry, was justified in the name of a quaint and vanished Germanism. The world was to be conquered for the sake of thatched roofs and an upright peasantry, for folk dances, celebrations of the winter solstice, and swastikas" (*Hitler,* pp. 103-104).

Patterning Party After Church

Hitler and his henchmen not only drew from the traditions of the Roman Empire, but the Roman church as well. Goebbels used the church's liturgy and rituals as models for Nazi mass meetings. He also found the Catholic concept of "people have to be told what to believe" much to his liking as propaganda minister. Himmler likewise patterned various SS doctrines on related ecclesiastical principles. And even Hitler admitted to a certain grudging admiration for various aspects of the church. According to Alan Bullock: "Hitler had been brought up as a Catholic and was impressed by the organization and power of the Church. Its hierarchical structure, its skill in dealing with human nature and the unalterable character of its Creed, were all

(Continued on page 48)



The "Spiritual" Side of Adolf Hitler

Strange as it may seem, Adolf Hitler was not an irreligious individual. In many respects, his climb to absolute power in Germany took on all the appearances of a national religious campaign. Like any self-respecting evangelist, Hitler had his share of mass revival meetings. He often preferred nocturnal surroundings because this tended to produce a rather apocalyptic, awe-inspiring setting. Alan Bullock, author of *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, gives us a graphic picture of what they were like: "To see the films of the Nuremberg rallies even today is to be recaptured by hypnotic effect of thousands of

men marching in perfect order, the music of the massed bands, the forest of standards and flags, the vast perspectives of the stadium, the smoking torches, the dome of searchlights. The sense of power, of force and unity was irresistible" (p. 379).

With all this going for him, Hitler's oratorical delivery was hard to resist. According to one observer, he "was an evangelist speaking to a camp meeting, the Billy Sunday of German politics." It's no wonder then that Goebbels likened these oratorical extravaganzas to "the divine services of our political work."

Spiritually speaking, Hitler also had plenty of help — especially when he was in the middle of one of his speeches. As another observer put it: " 'After about fifteen minutes . . . there takes place what can only be described in the primitive old figure of speech: the spirit enters into him' " (Fest, *Hitler,* p. 327).

Hitler admitted as much himself. He once stated: "But if the voice speaks, then I know the time has come to act." And on another occasion he made this chilling remark: "I go the way that Providence dictates with the assurance of a sleepwalker."

The French ambassador called him "a man possessed." So did one of the defense councils at the Nuremberg trials. Numerous people who came in contact with him made comments similar to this one: "The fanaticism in his eyes was the most commanding thing about him . . . they possess a hypnotic quality that can easily persuade his followers to do anything the mind behind the eyes desires" (*Is Tomorrow Hitler's?,* p. 43).

Hitler himself also took a perverted pleasure in haranguing the masses. He often compared the German people to a woman and called them his "only bride." His speeches tended to fulfill his twisted desires. According to Joachim Fest: "The sound recordings of the period clearly convey the peculiarly obscene . . . character of mass meetings" (*op. cit.,* p. 323).

Concerning Hitler's speaking, Fest went on to say: "With wild explosive movements, driving his metallicly transformed voice mercilessly to its highest pitch, he would hurl out the words. Quite often, in the furor of his conjuring, he would cover his grimacing face with his clenched fists and close his eyes, surrendering to the spasms of his transposed sexuality" (*ibid.,* p. 327).

In view of what followed in Nazi Germany, the biblical warnings concerning "seducing spirits" and "doctrines of demons" are certainly apropos when applied to the Fuehrer of the Third Reich.



Wide World

NATIONAL SOCIALISM *promised the downtrodden Germans a return to glittering Teutonic ideals.*

features from which he claimed to have learned" (p. 338).

As a result, the Nazi party ended up with some of the same basic features as the church. One author described the relationship as follows: "The party organization owed much to Hitler's acknowledgement, albeit reluctant, of the Catholic Church's success in the leadership of its people. The hierarchical traditions of the Roman Church exactly matched the *Führerprinzip* which the Nazis hoped to perpetuate. . . . The propaganda ministry hoped to achieve the same powers of indoctrination, and of censorship, which had enabled the Catholic Church to exercise its age-old control over the European masses" (*The Nazi Persecution of the Churches,* pp. 145-146).

The church, by the same token, initially found much to admire in both Nazi and Fascist parties. Catholic leaders appreciated the fact that these totalitarian regimes were attempting to mold a unified state — free from what they considered to be the rather distasteful divisions inherent within a democratic society. They also liked the idea of dealing with a strong man, who could act as guardian of church as well as state. This had only been traditional. In the past, champions like Charlemagne, Otto the Great, the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons had readily fulfilled this function of protecting the church. There was little reason to doubt that both Mussolini and Hitler would not follow suit if handled with proper care. Pius XI initially had only nice things to say about Mussolini, especially during the honeymoon with the Duce following the signing of the Lateran Pact in 1929. He called Mussolini "a man . . . whom Providence has

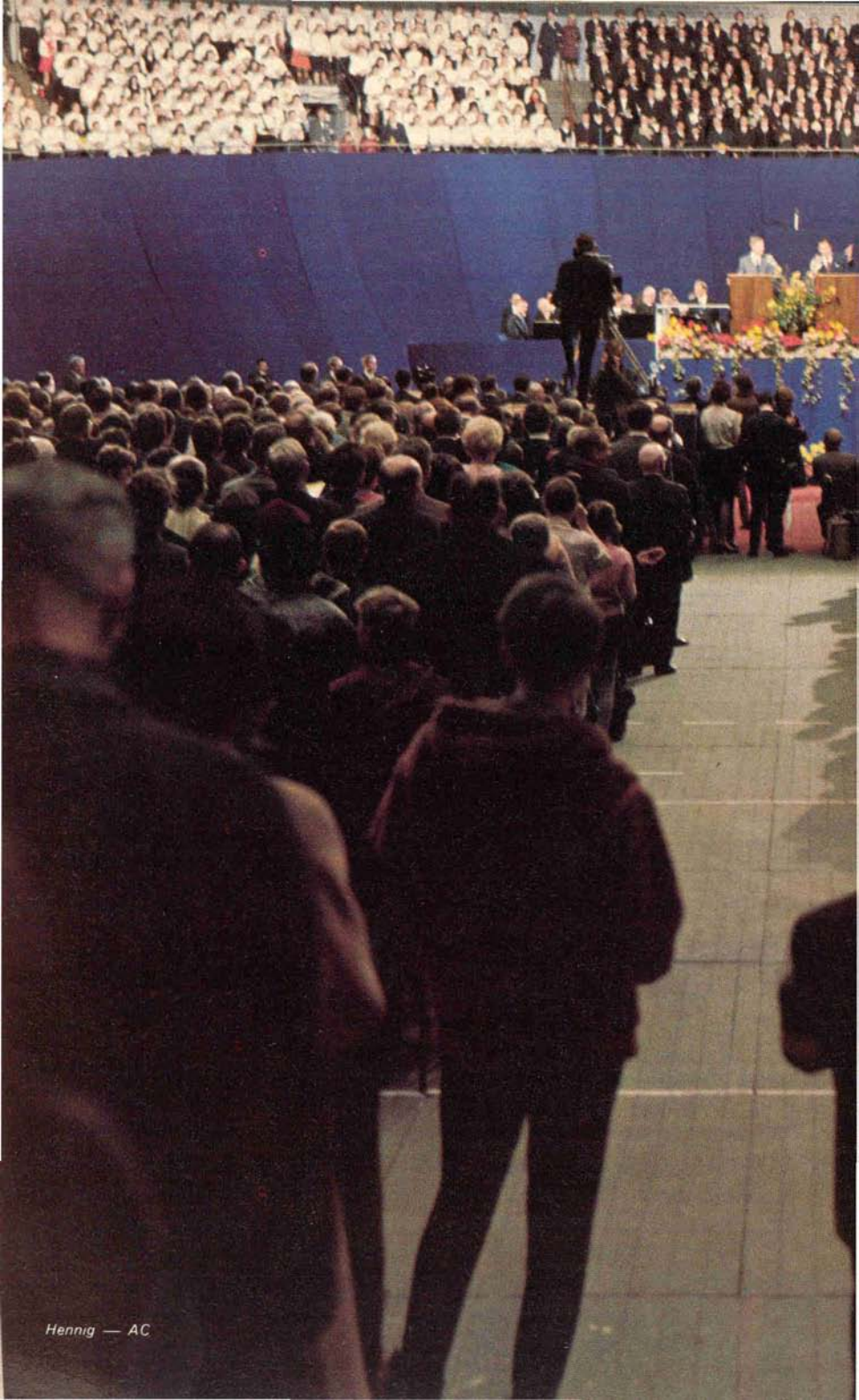
caused us to meet!" The Church agreed to endorse and support Mussolini's regime in return for a number of ecclesiastical privileges. Among them were recognition of Roman Catholicism as the "sole religion of the state," acceptance of clerical control of marriage, and establishment of religious instruction in secondary schools.

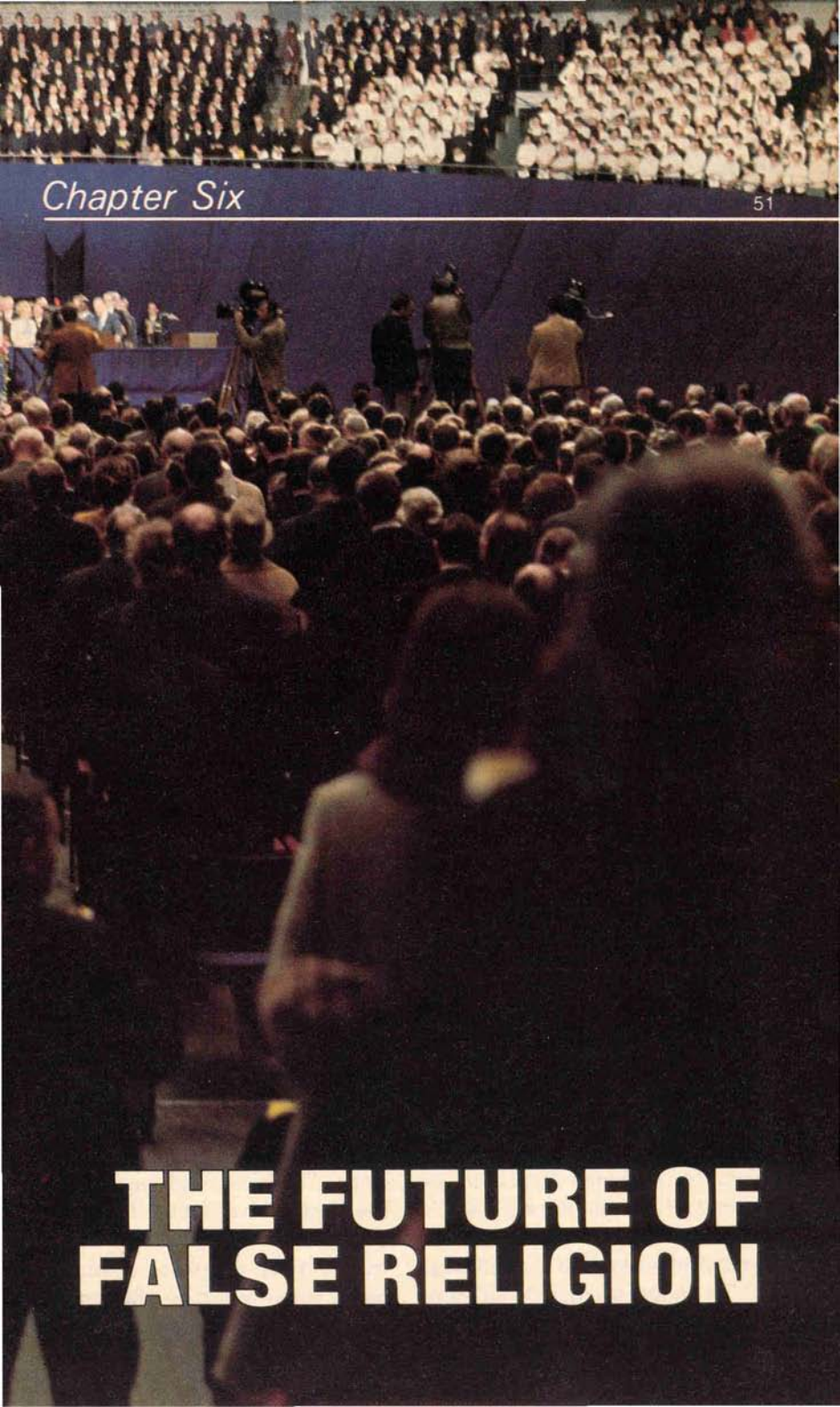
In 1933 a similar concordat was signed with Hitler. In doing so, the church effectively knocked the props out from under the last vestiges of legislative opposition to Hitler's drive for absolute power. The concordat also had another salutary effect on Hitler's regime. It gave it an aura of respectability at a time when it was badly needed. In the eyes of Germans and non-Germans alike the Fuehrer had now been recognized by the highest spiritual power on earth.

The Vatican continued to extend the cordialities for a number of years. In the early thirties it publicly praised the German chancellor for his staunch opposition to the menace of Communism. When Pius XII was elected as the head of the Holy See in 1939, Hitler was the first head of state to be notified. At the outset of the invasion of Russia in June 1941, the Vatican could still see fit to proclaim the following: "Certainly in the midst of surrounding darkness and storm, signs of light appear which lift up our hearts with great and holy expectations — these are those magnanimous acts of valour which now defend the foundations of Christian culture, as well as the confident hope in victory" (*The Vatican in the Age of Dictators,* p. 258).

Silence Is Not So Golden

As the intensity of the war continued to mount and the scope of the Nazi atrocities became more apparent, the Vatican was repeatedly urged to intervene on behalf of the Jews and other minorities who were being ruthlessly exterminated. About the closest the Pope ever came was the famous encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge.* Essentially all it did was make a feeble protest concerning Nazi violations against the church and the terms of the 1933 concordat. For the duration of the war, the Nazi hierarchy went about the grim business of terrorizing Jew and non-Jew alike with little public opposition from the ranks of established European Christendom.


Hennig — AC



THE FUTURE OF FALSE RELIGION

Can humanity eliminate its age-old religious problems? Or will false religion threaten to eliminate the human race? Those questions were discussed some 2000 years ago by the foremost newscaster and prophet who ever lived — Jesus Christ.

After He had foretold the destruction of the magnificent Herodian temple in the pivotal Olivet Prophecy recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew, His disciples naturally wanted to know more. So they asked Him: "When will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

Including the Broad Majority

Christ's reply was quite revealing: "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For *many* will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead *many* astray" (Matt. 24:4-5).

Religious deception, then, was the number-one item on Christ's prophetic agenda — and not of a few fringe groups or minor sects, but *of the many.*

To many of us living in civilized, "Christianized" Western society such a concept might seem farfetched. Yet the New Testament is full of repeated warnings and prophecies concerning widespread acceptance of false religious practices and doctrines. In Revelation 12:9 the apostle John added to the scope of Christ's original prediction when he wrote: "And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of *the whole world. . . .*"

Granted, such statements can be interpreted to include Oriental mystery religions, pagan cults, Satan worship and the like. But many New Testament warnings are directed at mainline Christianity as well. For instance, notice what Paul said in II Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, *disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness."

Paul also spoke of "fierce wolves" who would not spare the flock (Acts 20:29). John observed that even in his day "many false prophets" had already gone out into the world

(I John 4:1). Christ referred to his true followers as the "little flock," and went on to say: "Broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many there be* which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13, KJV).

On top of this, the New Testament writers prophesied that this religious confusion would eventually get worse before getting better. Paul warned Timothy that "evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). In the Olivet prophecy, Christ described a future time when religious deception would finally be so bad that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24, KJV).

Christ's end-time prophecies were corroborated by John, writing in the book of Revelation. In the sixth chapter, he describes a mysterious "white horse" that comes riding onto the world scene: "And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). Like the real thing it represents, even this symbolic horseman has tended to cause confusion. Some have attempted to equate its ride with the events surrounding the return of Christ on the white horse of Revelation 19:11-15. However, there are a number of differences between the two.

The Two White Horses

The returning Christ of Revelation 19 wields a *sword* out of his *mouth,* while the horseman of Revelation 6 carries a *bow* in his *hand.*

Were Christ to return on the white horse of Revelation 6, He would precede the darkest, most troubled time period of the earth's history, known as the Great Tribulation. A quick comparison of Joel 2:31, Matthew 24:29-30 and Revelation 6:12-17 will show that Christ doesn't return until after this Great Tribulation. Christ's second coming ushers in the peaceful period known as the millennium. The white horseman in Revelation 6, on the other hand, is the harbinger of a series of calamitous events that culminate in the prophesied Great Tribulation.

A comparison of some of the basic events in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 with those in Revelation 6 also sheds further light on this enigmatic white horse and its rider. The first subject of prophetic significance that Christ mentioned in His Olivet discourse was religious deception. It was in turn followed by wars and famines (Matt. 24:7).

Luke lists wars, famines and pestilences (Luke 21:10-11) after religious deception. The white horse of Revelation 6 is, in turn, followed by the red horse of war, the black horse of famine, and the pale horse of pestilence. From all indications, then, the white horse would correspond to the counterfeit Christs and religious deception first mentioned in the Olivet prophecy.

Others have assumed that this horseman represents the preaching of the gospel and the spread of Christianity. If this is the case, then it becomes difficult to explain the impact of that gospel in the light of the three horsemen that follow: war, famine and disease. The spread of the true gospel should by all reckoning offset these ill effects.

All-Conquering Religious Deception

John's horseman, after having given the world a slick religious feint, "went out conquering and to conquer." In the past, as we've already seen, the first horseman of false religion had plenty of outside help. Much of it came from a well-oiled combination of a false church aligned with an autocratic state.

Centuries ago, Daniel spoke of such a union in the seventh chapter of his prophetic book. He first began by predicting the rise of four great empires that would dominate the earth (verses 3-7). In Daniel's day the first of those empires — Babylon — was already well established as a world power (compare with Daniel 2:26-28, 36-40). It was subsequently followed by the Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires. But the fourth empire, Rome, was unique in that it came to be dominated by an ecclesiastical power Daniel symbolized as a "little horn."

Speaking of this horn, Daniel wrote: "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one . . . and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (verse 8).

Later on in the chapter, Daniel goes on to interpret this "beastly" vision and the little horn: "... And another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones. . . . He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law" (verses 24-25).

Years later the apostle John elaborated on this same basic

system. In the 13th chapter of the book of Revelation, he recorded the following vision: "And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a *blasphemous* name upon its heads" (verse 1). John went on to show how this particular beast possessed many of the same characteristics of the four beasts in Daniel 7 (compare Rev. 13:2 with Dan. 7:4-7).

An Ecclesiastical Counterpart

Like Daniel's fourth beast, this many-headed creature of Revelation 13 also has close ties with a priestly potentate. According to John: "Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon [reminiscent of a wolf in *sheep's* clothing]. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and *makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast . . .*" (verses 11-12).

Here we see what amounts to a state-supported church using authoritarian methods in order to force people into religious idolatry. To facilitate the process, the second beast has an image of the initial state system erected (verse 14). An autocratic state organization becomes an effective model for an ecclesiastical hierarchy bent on maintaining an iron grip on the religious thoughts of its subjects.

This particular pattern of church and state authority was put to use during the Middle Ages. The medieval church was organized along patterns previously established by Imperial Rome and effectively maintained an exclusive religious monopoly throughout the Western world. Men feared the power of the church more than virtually anything else in their lives. In that sense, the church operated by using its own structure as an object of worship. Under the Nazi Third Reich the pattern was reversed, as political party modeled itself after the church hierarchy in order to maintain control over the minds of men.

An End-Time Fulfillment

This type of church-state totalitarianism as described by John has raised its ugly head in successive revivals throughout most of Western history. And while the book of Revelation does have an ongoing historical fulfillment, its main emphasis is on events that will occur during the climactic end time just prior to the return of Christ.

In the 17th chapter of Reve-

lation, John went on to describe a fallen woman (symbolizing a church) sitting astride a supranational state system (consisting of ten kings, see verses 10-14). Throughout most of this calamitous period, this revitalized church-state system will be operating in a high-handed fashion (verse 4). Living under its jurisdiction may be the closest thing to hell on earth that will ever occur. Religious deception during this time will be at an all-time high. According to John: "Men worshiped the dragon [Satan the Devil], for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?' " (Rev. 13:4.)

Not only will people be taken in by the beast power's religious sleight of hand, but they will idolize its military exploits as well. In such an atmosphere it's no surprise that the other three horsemen of the apocalypse — war, famine and pestilence — will be riding at full gallop.

Religious Martyrdom

During this tumultuous period of time, there will be a few stubborn souls, known as the "elect" (Matt. 24:24), who will not be taken in by this marvelous church-state megamachine. As we have already seen, this can and will be extremely dangerous to life and health. The resurrected church-state system, like its predecessors, will not tolerate dissension in the ranks. Under the circumstances, its actions will be very predictable. Religious persecution will be at an all-time high. As John wrote: "I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6).

Jeremiah describes this future dark age as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7, KJV). Daniel calls it "a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time" (Dan. 12:1). One reason for this unprecedented world tumult will be the hyperactive involvement of Satan the devil. According to John: "Woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" (Rev. 12:12.)

Using the resurrected church-state system, Satan will direct much of his vengeful attack against God's people — especially those doing His Work (see Rev. 11; 12:13-17; Matt. 24:9). Satan and his military and ecclesiastical minions will be so effective that the world will be brought perilously close to the brink of global cosmo-

cide. Christ said that unless He intervened to cut short the carnage, "no human being would be saved" (Matt. 24:22). But even when He does, people will be so religiously mixed up, deceived and bamboozled that they will actually gather to fight and resist the "King of kings" when He returns to the earth (see Rev. 19:19-20; 17:14).

Finding the Cure

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the predominance of false religion has been an unfortunate fact of life throughout virtually all of recorded history. Today religious deception in its many and varied forms still holds sway over the vast majority of the human race. The Oriental faiths have left millions of Asians enslaved and impoverished under the yoke of centuries-old traditions. Communism likewise has managed to quash initiatives and freedoms in both West and East alike, all because a handful of men arrogantly have assumed that they have the prerogative to dictate their secular religion to the masses. False religion not only is the champion of an oppressive status quo in many parts of the world, but also the main motivating force behind wars and destructive revolutions. As George Washington once said: "Of all the animosities which have existed among mankind, those which are caused by a difference of sentiments in religion appear to be the most inveterate and distressing, and ought most to be deprecated" (*American State Papers,* p. 155).

In addition to contributing to many of the world's problems, religion has ignored scores of others. As we saw in the second chapter, this shortcoming basically stems from the otherworldly, ascetic attitudes that were infused into early Christianity from Greek Hellenism. Ever since, most men have used their religion as a cop-out rather than a cure. The late Reinhold Niebuhr expressed this feeling when he wrote: "If we sum up this record of orthodox Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, we are forced to the conclusion that it has consistently failed to maintain the prophetic criticism against both the nation and the state..." (*Faith and Politics,* p. 94).

The Choice Before Us

In view of the impending disasters that are prophesied to follow hard on the heels of the white horse of false religion, drastic changes are needed.

Centuries ago, a group of

people were faced with the same basic issue that now confronts the human race (especially the Western world). In the 26th chapter of Leviticus, God gave the nation of ancient Israel some rather clear-cut choices. One of the biggest ones had to do with their religious observances.

In the first verse of this chapter, God warned them not to adopt any false religious practices or bow down before any man-made images. Worship of God and obedience to His commandments would bring generous rewards (verses 3-13), but if they refused to obey these injunctions, God warned: "I will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, consumption [disease], and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. And you shall sow your seed in vain [crop failures], for your enemies shall eat it [in our generation the Russians have already been doing just that].... And I will break the pride of your power [the United States and Britain have continually lost face before former friends and allies. America fumbled away the Korean and Indo-China Wars, was humiliated at the Bay of Pigs and over the Pueblo debacle, and by mid-1970 seemed impotent and indecisive in the face of strong Communist aggressions in Africa and Southeast Asia], and I will make your heavens like iron [drought — like the kind farmers and ranchers have recently experienced from Kansas to California] and your earth like brass [loss of valuable farmlands, which America is also experiencing due to a variety of natural and man-made causes]; and your strength shall be spent in vain [Vietnam is a classic case in point], for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit [resulting in famine — the third horseman].... And I will bring a sword upon you [war — the second horseman]... and if you gather within your cities I will send pestilence [the fourth horseman] among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy [national captivity]" (Lev. 26:16-17, 19-20, 25).

Modern Form of Idolatry

Ancient Israel failed to meet this challenge God set before them. Because of their flagrant disobedience to His commands and continued dabbling in various idolatrous practices, they suffered the penalties listed in Leviticus 26 and ultimately went into national captivity at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

Today the nations of the Western world, especially the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa, face the same challenge. Unfortunately, they too, like ancient Israel, have gone after strange gods. These gods are not the kind made from sticks, metal, or stone, but are typified by ideas, concepts and institutions.

Repeatedly Western democracies have looked to their leaders, native institutions, liberal democratic ideologies, and more recently science and technology, to bail them out in time of crisis. Most Americans somehow feel that the latest face in the election sweepstakes, their post-Watergate self-righteousness, the free enterprise system, the workings of the constitution, greater material growth, more jobs, or lower taxes will somehow see them through. The people of Britain simultaneously lie prostrated before the altars of state socialism, trade unionism, the "I'm-all-right-Jack" and "There'll-always-be-an-England" concepts.

If the English-speaking nations of the world think that they can continue to blindly follow such shopworn idols into the promised land, they are sadly mistaken. All the ideologies, economic theories and governmental formulas known to man will never bring salvation either on a national or individual basis. The only One that can do that is the Supreme Ruler and Creator of the universe.

Until humanity undertakes a fundamental and radical overhaul of their social faiths and ideologies, the plagues, calamities and catastrophes recorded in Leviticus 26, Jesus Christ's Olivet prophecy and the book of Revelation will ultimately be the order of the day. In this respect, the words of the apostle Peter have never been more relevant than to this generation: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ [the real Savior] appointed for you, Jesus" (Acts 3:19).

There is still time for many to come out of the religious Babylon that currently deceives this world (Rev. 18:4). If you as an individual are interested, why not begin to go back and take inventory of your current religious beliefs? Study them in the light of what God says in the Bible. And if you want additional helpful information, write for the literature that is advertised in this booklet.

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